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VAN CLEVE AT CHICKAMAUGA: THE STUDY OF
A DIVISION'S PERFORMANCE IN BATTLE

A Thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by
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B.A., North Georgia College, Dahlonega, Georgia, 1983

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
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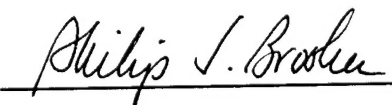
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ABSTRACT

BRIGADIER GENERAL HORATIO P. VAN CLEVE AT CHICKAMAUGA: THE STUDY OF A DIVISION'S PERFORMANCE IN BATTLE by MAJ Robert P. Lott, Jr., USA, 198 pages.

This thesis is an analysis of General Van Cleve and his division to determine the proximate causes for their failure to withstand the brutal test of combat throughout the two-day battle.

The thesis begins with a discussion of the importance of the study of war in order to draw out lessons which are still pertinent to today's officer. The thesis then briefly describes the weapons, tactics, organization, and staff available to a division commander during the American Civil War. The thesis continues with an examination of the backgrounds and combat experiences of Brigadier General Van Cleve, his staff, and his brigade and regimental commanders. The backgrounds and combat experiences of the regiments which comprised the division are also evaluated. Thereafter, the thesis analyzes the performance of General Van Cleve and his division beginning with their first combat action at the Battle of Stones River and culminates with an in-depth study of the division's performance at Chickamauga.

The fog of war impacted negatively on Van Cleve's ability to control his men, yet his own personal shortcomings ultimately doomed the division to failure.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis would not have been written without the assistance and support of my family. My wife Leslie voluntarily became my typist, grammar and spelling checker, mapmaker, and accountant. Without her indispensable help, any quality this thesis might attain would be significantly less. My children, Travis and Brantley, suffered through numerous nights and weekends without their Dad, knowing their "quiet understanding" was truly appreciated. I must also acknowledge the support of my father, Robert Lott, Sr., who became as interested in this paper as I did and happily contributed many hours researching topics and proofreading drafts. Finally, I thank my MMAS Committee, Dr. Robertson, Major Bassett, and Major Dalessandro, who provided the necessary direction, guidance, and motivation to see me through this endeavor.

To a much greater degree, I would like to acknowledge the actual participants of the Battle of Chickamauga. Raised in the finest of Southern traditions, I had very little appreciation for the qualities of the officers and men who fought for the "other" side. I am now struck by the phenomenal hardships and hazards the men endured to fight for a cause that could, and often did, cost them their very lives. The tremendous courage and dedication to duty exhibited by men in both armies was truly astounding.

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PREFACE

It was our own fault, and our very grave fault, and now we must turn it to use. We have forty million reasons for failure, but not a single excuse!

Rudyard Kipling

Why is the study of a division commander and the performance of his division engaged in combat during two days in September 1863 important to the modern day officer on the eve of the U.S. Army's transition to Force XXI?

The study of military history is not accomplished merely for the sake of reading, but rather to ascertain those insights and principles that led to success or failure on earlier battlefields. The ability to gain an understanding of "what works and what doesn't" is accomplished through the study of historical examples of battlefield experiences. Field Marshal Earl Wavell probably best expressed the proper and practical use for the study of military history today when he said:

The real way to get value out of the study of military history is to take particular situations, and as far as possible get inside the skin of the man who made a decision and then see in what way you could improve upon it.¹

The purpose of this thesis is to provide beneficial insight into the leadership qualities and tactical considerations so necessary in combat. These qualities and considerations remain timeless in their value. As a division commander who fought at Chickamauga, General

Horatio P. Van Cleve suffered from the fog of war created by the chaos of combat, but as a leader it was his own shortcomings and their impact on his men that ultimately doomed the division at Chickamauga.

In this day and age, the goal of Force XXI is to give the commander quick access to battlefield information which will effectively reduce much of the fog and friction of war. Yet, even given perfect "intelligence," the human dimension in combat will always remain a constant variable that cannot be controlled or led by computers. It is important to remember that even in the information age, war will remain a human endeavor, subject to emotion and characterized by the shedding of blood and by the effects of chance. Information-age warfare will not be remote, bloodless, sterile, or risk free--it will still be war.² Wars are fought and won by soldiers on the ground, not by state-of-the-art computers. Therefore, it is not at all surprising that the most essential component of combat power is competent and confident leadership.

Modern-day commanders still must possess the leadership qualities required to lead troops in combat. Leaders inspire soldiers with the will to win. Leaders provide purpose, direction, and motivation in combat. Successful leaders effectively employ all the elements of combat power against the enemy: leadership, maneuver, firepower, and force protection.³ The Information Age and all the technological advances of Force XXI will, of course, be a tremendous asset to commanders in the field, but a competent and confident leader who possesses the ability to accurately see himself, his unit, the terrain, and the enemy and to visualize the future will ultimately decide the outcome of battles and campaigns.

There are, not surprisingly, many tactical insights that can be found while studying General Van Cleve's experiences at Chickamauga. These lessons are still applicable to today's officer. Situational awareness on the battlefield; developing, issuing, and executing commander's intent; the ability to integrate supporting arms; the high cost of turbulence of commanders and soldiers; the impact of terrain; the proper location of the commander in combat; the effect of piecemealing units; coordination with adjacent units; and force protection through the reduction of fratricide are some of the tactical lessons gained through this study. These issues are no less pertinent today as leaders are likely to discuss these same topics in an After-Action Review (AAR) van following a present-day battle at the National Training Center.

This thesis provides a comprehensive look at what happened to one division at Chickamauga. The thesis briefly describes the weapons, tactics, organization, and staff available to a division commander during the American Civil War, then continues with an examination of the backgrounds and combat experiences of Brigadier General Van Cleve, his staff, and his brigade and regimental commanders. The backgrounds and combat experiences of the regiments which comprised the division are also evaluated. Thereafter, the thesis analyzes the performance of General Van Cleve and his division beginning with their first combat action at the Battle of Stones River and culminates with an in-depth study of the division's performance at Chickamauga. This study will reinforce the reader's appreciation of the constant requirement for competent and confident leadership and develop some insights into time-

honored tactical principles, emphasizing the practicality and importance of applying these principles today.

In this day and age, the Army is in a period of marked transition as it sits on the threshold of the twenty-first century. Generals and statesmen are trying to determine what Force XXI will look like, how it will fight, and what tactics army maneuver units will employ. It is a period of vast technological improvements in equipment and weapon systems, yet strong leaders will still be required to lead soldiers into the twenty-first century. It is appropriate to take the time for some thoughtful reflection on General Van Cleve, his men, and their experiences at Chickamauga. The time period that General Van Cleve went to war was marked by tremendous change brought about by the vast improvements in weapon systems. The changes were not unlike the current period of transition to Force XXI. However, quality leadership was essential then, and will always remain an essential combat multiplier, regardless of the passage of time or the changes brought about by technology.

Superior combat power is not derived from computers and new technology, but by the courage and competence of the soldiers, the quality of their training, and above all, the quality of their leadership which remains the deciding factor in the success or failure of men in combat.⁴

Endnotes

¹Jay Luvaas, "Military History: Is it Still Practicable?" Parameters 1, (19).

²Army Focus (Washington, D.C.: Department of U.S. Army, September 1994), 47.

³U.S. Army FM 100-5 Operations (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, June 1993), 2-11.

⁴ Ibid., 2-12. ⁴Jay Luvass, "Military History: Is it Still Practicable?" Parameters 1, (19).

⁴Army Focus (Washington, D.C.: Department of U.S. Army, September 1994), 47.

⁴U.S. Army FM 100-5 Operations (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, June 1993), 2-11.

⁴ Ibid., 2-12.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

A jingling staff was galloping hither and thither. Sometimes the general was surrounded by horsemen and at other times he was quite alone. He looked to be much harassed. He had the appearance of a business man whose market is swinging up and down.

Stephen Crane
from Red Badge of Courage

The debacle the Federal Army of the Cumberland suffered at the Battle of Chickamauga on the nineteenth and twentieth of September 1863 caused a massive reorganization of that army. General Orders number 322, effective 28 September 1863, reorganized and consolidated the 20th and 21st Corps, Army of the Cumberland.¹ The Army Commander General W. S. Rosecrans was relieved of command, virtually ending his career in the Army.² The 21st Corps Commander General T. L. Crittenden found himself out of command after the reorganization and the subject of a board of inquiry.³ Brigadier General Horatio P. Van Cleve, a lesser known figure in American history, was never again entrusted with command of American troops in combat. Horatio P. Van Cleve, Brigadier General, United States Volunteers, was the commander of the 3rd Division, 21st Corps, Army of the Cumberland at Chickamauga. Was General Van Cleve's performance and that of his division so ineffective that he deserved to lose his command and to be posted to the nontaxing position of garrison commander of Murfreesboro? Were General Van Cleve's personal actions

and orders so inept that they resulted in the failure of his division to accomplish its mission. What were the proximate causes of Van Cleve's and his division's poor performance on the Chickamauga battlefield?⁴ The intent of this thesis is to focus on General Horatio P. Van Cleve and attempt to answer the previous questions.

This study will analyze General Van Cleve's past performance in combat and follow him and his division through the Battle of Chickamauga to determine the causes for the division's poor performance during the two-day battle. In order to satisfactorily answer the thesis question, there are numerous subordinate questions which must be raised and answered to form a complete picture of the man and his division. What were General Van Cleve's strengths and weaknesses as a combat commander? Did the weaknesses relate to the inability of the division to withstand the strong Confederate attacks of 19 and 20 September 1863? How had the division performed on other battlefields? What were the qualities and fighting capabilities of General Van Cleve's brigade and regimental commanders? How did other Federal division commanders and their units react to similar Confederate attacks? Finally, what was the unit's state of training and morale?

Before beginning this study of Van Cleve and his division, it is important to understand the general composition of his unit on the eve of the Battle of Chickamauga. The division General Van Cleve commanded was an entirely different organization from the division all army officers recognize today. The division employed during the Civil War was developed and formed largely along the same guidelines Napoleon employed for the organization of French divisions 50 years earlier.⁵ In

fact, American tactics, drill, organization, and doctrine of the period were copied directly from the French.⁶ The division- and brigade-sized units were mass assemblies of men fighting as companies and regiments. There were precious few "battle drills" available to General Van Cleve. There was actually little independent "maneuver" at brigade and division levels, except to move by flank, to avoid terrain obstacles or artillery fire, or to intercept or halt an enemy attack.⁷ Most often, battles quickly devolved into a confusing blur of regimental attacks and withdrawals completely beyond the control of higher-level commanders.⁸ Attacks were often made by succeeding lines or "waves" of regiments or brigades fighting each other from a distance of 250 to 300 yards.⁹

A regiment normally fought with eight of its ten companies on line formed in two ranks of men. One company might be held back in reserve, and one company might be sent forward as a skirmish line. It was normal for the lead regiments in the brigade to have another regiment positioned behind it to act as close support.¹⁰

In battle, General Van Cleve did not receive a complete, in-depth five-paragraph operations order from his corps commander for his mission. More often than not, Van Cleve received a short, terse mission which often resulted in his lacking a clear understanding of his commander's intent.¹¹ This mission statement was often delivered verbally by a staff officer who may or may not have used the commander's exact words.¹²

General Van Cleve did not have a complete division staff as it is known today. The staff he did have was not capable of functioning at the high levels of efficiency currently expected from a division staff

today. Van Cleve did not have the luxury of the G-3 plans and operations sections, or the G-2 intelligence section to aid him in the complex art and science of waging war. The 3rd Division staff at Chickamauga consisted of an assistant adjutant general, chief of artillery, division inspector general, medical director, commissary officer, ordnance officer, topographical engineer, provost marshal, and three aide-de-camps. These staff positions were all held by captains with the exceptions of the medical director who was a major and two of the aides who were lieutenants.¹³ The soldiers of the 3rd Division lived or died by the relatively quick decisions made by their commander. Van Cleve made decisions based on what is referred to today as the "five competencies of the art of battle command." He relied solely on his ability "to visualize himself and his unit," his ability "to see the enemy and the terrain," and through his "ability to visualize an endstate," he would command his division in combat to complete the mission.

Van Cleve's division was not organized according to a specific table of organization and equipment. By 1863, the infantry division averaged about 6,200 men; yet in September 1863, Van Cleve's division numbered only 4,436 officers and men.¹⁴ During the Civil War, a division consisted of two or more brigades and was commanded by a brigadier or major general. Brigades contained two or more regiments and were commanded by a brigadier general or colonel. The regiments comprising the brigades were commanded by a colonel, a lieutenant colonel, or a major, and there were three to five regiments assigned to a brigade. In the Federal Army, the state volunteer regiments were not grouped together with any due consideration to their state allegiance.¹⁵

The volunteer infantry regiment at full strength as prescribed in the regulations of the U.S. Army consisted of approximately 1,000 men. The regiment consisted of ten companies; each company numbered approximately 97 men and three officers and was commanded by a captain. The regimental commander was assisted by a lieutenant colonel, a major, an adjutant (normally a lieutenant), a quartermaster officer, a surgeon, and an assistant surgeon. The enlisted staff members included the regimental sergeant major, a quartermaster sergeant, a commissary sergeant, and one hospital steward. Each regiment also had a 26-member band. By 1863, regimental commanders rarely mustered more than 425 men, and regiments were allowed to gradually dwindle in strength.¹⁶ Regimental commanders and their soldiers gained tremendous pride and esprit de corps in their regiments and did not want their unit disbanded. Thus it is understandable why two of General Van Cleve's regimental commanders were away on recruiting duty during the Battle of Chickamauga.

The soldiers of Van Cleve's division were issued the British Enfield rifle in the spring of 1863. The .577 caliber Enfield rifle was 54 inches long and weighed 8.7 pounds and could be fitted with an 18-inch bayonet. The Enfield fired a Minié ball and had a maximum effective range of 500 yards; however, the rifle could kill an opponent at 1,000 yards. A well-trained soldier could load and fire three well-aimed shots with his rifle in one minute. The Enfield rifle closely resembled the American Springfield rifle in characteristics and capabilities, and the quality of the Enfield was considered to be very good. The standardization of the infantry weapon in the division made ammunition resupply much easier as the quartermaster officer no longer

had to concern himself with the different calibers of ammunition the men required.

Divisions also had their own organic artillery batteries which usually consisted of three batteries with six guns per battery. The guns assigned to the battery were normally not composed of standard makes and models. It was common to find two or more different types of guns in one artillery battery. Van Cleve's artillery at Chickamauga consisted of eight 10-pounder Parrots, four 12-pounder Napoleons, four 6-pounder smoothbore cannons, and two 6-pounder James rifles.¹⁷ One battery was normally allotted to each brigade and had an authorized strength of 80 to 156 men. A normal six-gun battery could include as many as 130 horses to pull the guns, caissons, and limbers.¹⁸

The ammunition available to the artillerymen consisted of four general types for both smoothbore and rifled cannons: solid shot, shell, case, and canister. Solid shot was used for its smashing or battering effect against buildings, fortifications, and massed formations. The shell was a hollow projectile filled with explosive and detonated by a time fuse. The purpose of the shell was to explode over the heads of troops and break into jagged pieces. Shell was used in a counterbattery and antipersonnel role. Case or case shot was similar to shell except that the walls were thinner. The case was filled with iron or lead balls and was designed to burst over the heads of the troops. This type of ammunition was largely used for its antipersonnel effects. Canister was essentially a tin can filled with iron balls and was designed for use against massed troops at close range. It was common

for artillerymen to load double charges of canister if their opponent was within an extremely close range.¹⁹

A division normally conducted training for its soldiers while enroute to the next battle or while in bivouac.²⁰ Except when marching to the next objective, an average training day in General Van Cleve's division consisted of drill in the morning, afternoon, and evening. More importantly, prior military training for the volunteer officers was practically nonexistent unless an officer had graduated from the U.S. Military Academy or had gained combat experience during the Mexican War. The printing of training manuals became big business as officers elected from civilian life attempted to learn all that was possible about conducting war. The officers in Van Cleve's division ordered copies of Casey's Tactics and spent the summer of 1863 reviewing the manuals in officer professional development sessions.

Unfortunately for Americans, the development of tactics and doctrine did not keep pace with the tremendous advances made in metallurgy, weapons, ammunition, explosives, and transportation.²¹ However, some American tactical doctrine writers did recognize the potential impact of the new technology on the battlefield. In an attempt to provide an adequate response to the rifled musket and the Minié ball, Major William J. Hardee published the two-volume manual Rifle and Infantry Tactics in 1855. Hardee's manuals emphasized an increase in the speed of the attacker to a "double-quick" time (165 steps per minute),²² giving the attacker the ability to cover 151 yards of ground per minute. Hardee became a general officer in the Confederate army during the Civil War. This caused an understandable amount of dissatis-

faction among Northern officers who were reluctant to study a tactical manual written by a Confederate officer. The problem was solved in August 1862 when Silas Casey published his three-volume manual Infantry Tactics for the Federal Army. Regardless, during this period of military history, weaponry advanced beyond the tactics of the period, effectively making the division organization and tactical employment as conceived by Napoleon obsolete.²³

Chapter 1 has introduced the thesis and the main and subordinate questions to be answered along with relevant background information. Chapter 2 delves into the background of Horatio P. Van Cleve, his personal life, and his past performance as a commander in combat. This second chapter concludes with an overview of the staff of the 3rd Division. Chapter 3 continues with an in-depth look at the brigade and regimental commanders and examines the history of each of the regiments present as part of the 3rd Division at Chickamauga. Chapter 4 analyzes the battle of Stones River, which was the first major battle the division fought together after being organized into the 3rd Division. It also explores the experiences of the division leading up to the battle at Chickamauga. Chapter 5 presents an overview of the first day's fighting at Chickamauga and analyzes the conduct of the 3rd Division in combat on the nineteenth of September 1863. Chapter 6 presents an overview and analyzes the conduct of the division in combat on the twentieth of September 1863. Chapter 7 presents this study's findings and concludes with the answer to the thesis question.

Definitions

In the interest of standardizing terms and a providing a more precise definition, the following words and their definitions will be adhered to throughout the study.

Battle. A battle consists of a series of related engagements; it lasts longer than an engagement, involves larger forces, and could affect the course of the campaign. Battles occur when division, corps, or army commanders fight for significant objectives. They may be short and fought in relatively small areas.²⁴

Engagement. Engagements are small conflicts or skirmishes, usually between maneuver forces; they are short in duration and fought at division level or below. They include covering forces and guard forces. Also, units in the defense fight engagements when they encounter the enemy. These engagements may or may not bring on battle.²⁵

Combat Veteran Unit and Commander. A combat veteran unit is defined as a unit which had participated in a minimum of two battles prior to Chickamauga. A combat veteran commander must have commanded in a minimum of two battles, though not necessarily at the same level of rank or responsibility.

Combat-Experienced Unit and Commander. A combat-experienced unit is defined as a unit which has participated in at least two engagements prior to Chickamauga. A combat-experienced commander must have commanded in a minimum of two engagements, though not necessarily at the same level of rank or responsibility.

Combat-Inexperienced or "Green" Unit/Commander. A unit or commander void of any combat experience gained through engagements or battle regardless of the length of active federal service.

Limitations

There is not a vast amount of first-hand information or research material available on the main subject of this study Horatio P. Van Cleve or on some of the other key individuals treated in this thesis. It is important for the reader to understand that the analysis of the division or General Van Cleve has not been based on second-hand accounts. Therefore, a true limitation of this study is the amount of first-hand information or personal information actually available. Although there are 16 cartons of Van Cleve's personal papers stored in Minnesota, the passage of time has rendered these papers unreadable and indeed cannot even be handled, much less studied, by the enthusiastic researcher. During the course of this research, the Minnesota Historical Society, the National Archives, and other state historical societies helped open many doors, but the information available was not always sufficient to bring Van Cleve and other key characters into perfect focus for each and every aspect of their lives.

Delimitations

This study centers on the actions of General Van Cleve and his division beginning with the engagement prior to the Battle of Stones River at Lavergne on 9 December 1862 and continues through the conclusion of the Battle of Chickamauga. Of course some histories of the key individuals and units involved have been researched through

periods previous to December 1862. Although that research will not include any in-depth analysis, it should provide a more complete understanding of the 3rd Division, its officers, and its men. This research appreciates that it would be impossible and unjust to critically assess the men who fought on both sides of this battle without a thorough understanding of their background.

Also, the division did not fight "full up" throughout the Battle of Chickamauga. On both days of battle, General Van Cleve had only two of his three brigades under his command. The brigade not under his command will be mentioned and its conduct in the battle reviewed in order to provide a better understanding of the brigade commander's capabilities; however, the separate brigade's conduct will not influence the outcome of the research.

Endnotes

- ¹Frederick H. Dyer, Compendium of the War of the Rebellion (Dayton, OH: The Press of Morningside Bookshop), 452.
- ²Ezra J. Warner, Generals in Blue (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1964), 411.
- ³Ibid., 100.
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CHAPTER 2
VAN CLEVE AND HIS STAFF

The General Commanding. I have formed a picture of a general commanding which is not chimerical--I have seen such men.

The first of all qualities is COURAGE. Without this the others are of little value, since they cannot be used. The second is INTELLIGENCE, which must be strong and fertile in expedients. The third is HEALTH.

He should possess a talent for sudden and appropriate improvisation. He should be able to penetrate the minds of other men, while remaining impenetrable himself. He should be endowed with the capacity of being prepared for everything, with activity accompanied by judgment, with skill to make a proper decision on all occasions, and with exactness of discernment.

Marshal Maurice de Saxe
from My Reveries Upon the Art of War

Division Brigadier General Horatio P. Van Cleve
Commander, 3rd Division, 21st Corps

Brigadier General Horatio P. Van Cleve, respectfully² nicknamed "Grand pap" by his soldiers¹ and lovingly referred to as "the General" by his wife Charlotte,² was born in Princeton, New Jersey on 23 November 1809.³ By September 1863, he was the oldest general officer in the Army of the Cumberland, and just two months shy of his 54th birthday.⁴ His senior civilian education began at the College of New Jersey, which is now Princeton. In 1827, he won an appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point and graduated in 1831,⁵ ranking 24th out of a class of 33.⁶ After commissioning and graduation, he was billeted

as a 2nd Lieutenant in the 5th Infantry, serving on frontier duty at Fort Howard, Winnebago, Wisconsin until 1836. On 11 September 1836, he resigned his commission to become a civilian. Before resigning from the Army, Van Cleve married Charlotte Clark, who was ten years younger than he and the daughter of Major Nathan Clark, commander of Fort Howard and Van Cleve's commanding officer. Charlotte had identified Lieutenant Van Cleve as the man she wished to marry three years earlier at the tender age of 14.⁷ He began his civilian life with his new wife as a farmer in Monroe, Michigan, and farmed the land for the next three years. In the following years, he criss-crossed the Midwest, pursuing careers as a teacher, civil engineer, and surveyor. When the war began in 1861, he was farming again in Minnesota.⁸ Before the war began, Van Cleve had started or restarted seven different career paths at several different locations.

On 22 July 1861, Van Cleve was commissioned a colonel and appointed as the Commander of the 2nd Minnesota Volunteer Infantry Regiment by the Honorable Alexander Ramsey, Governor of Minnesota.⁹ The 2nd Minnesota numbered approximately 1,000 men by the time they departed Fort Snelling, Minnesota for war.¹⁰ This was easily the largest force Van Cleve had ever attempted to command and control up to that time. By 1861, Van Cleve had been out of active military service for a quarter of a century and did not have the benefit of any prior combat experience in war. His breadth of combat experience to that point was only company level operations against small bands of Indians in Wisconsin.

While at Fort Snelling, the regiment used the few days available to drill; practice guard mounts; conduct dress parades; and issue

uniforms, equipment, arms, and ammunition.¹¹ During these days, Mrs. and Miss Van Cleve were regular visitors to the regimental headquarters. They were remembered by the soldiers as having taken a ". . . kindly interest in everything that occurred, the regiment was always manifest and will be always gratefully remembered by the men."¹²

On 14 October 1861, the regiment embarked on a large river steamboat and moved to Louisville, Kentucky, landing on 22 October. The 2nd Minnesota was initially assigned to General W. T. Sherman, Commander of the Department of the Cumberland. On 15 November, as General D. C. Buell assumed command of the Army of the Ohio, General George H. Thomas assumed command of the division to which Van Cleve's regiment belonged. The 2nd Minnesota was assigned to the 3rd Brigade of the division, commanded by Colonel R. L. McCook.¹³ It was at this point that Van Cleve and several other officers in the Army of the Cumberland met and shared close relationships. Friendships made in the early days of the war held them in good stead at Chickamauga.

On the morning of 1 January 1862, the regiment folded tents, loaded baggage trains, and marched south with the regimental band playing Dixie and The Girl I Left Behind Me.¹⁴ Marching continuously, the head of the column arrived at Logan's Crossroads on 17 January 1862. Logan's Crossroads was located nine miles north of the Confederates' encampment at Beech Grove.¹⁵ The Confederates were under the overall command of General Felix Zollicoffer. By 18 January, the Federal Army massed seven infantry regiments, two infantry battalions, and two artillery batteries for the first of many battles fought to defeat the Southern forces in the West. General George B. Crittenden, the

Confederate Commander, had a force consisting of eight infantry regiments, three infantry battalions, and two artillery batteries.¹⁶

Crittenden's forces began their movement to contact at midnight on the eighteenth through the mud, rain, and cold to start the battle. At daybreak, the Confederates struck the picket line of the 10th Indiana. The first sounds of combat Van Cleve was to hear in the war started small with a musket shot, then another, and then five or six more in quick succession.¹⁷ In fact, the Battle of Mill Springs was the first and only contested battle Van Cleve experienced before he commanded a division at the Battle of Stones River. The Confederates initiated the attack against the 10th Indiana and the 4th Kentucky. Those two regiments put up a spirited defense for about 30 minutes before other units came to their aid.¹⁸ The 10th Indiana was pulled off-line to resupply its ammunition. In the meantime, the 2nd Minnesota and the 9th Ohio arrived under General Thomas's personal direction. Van Cleve immediately deployed the 2nd Minnesota, taking the place previously occupied by the 10th Indiana.¹⁹

The rain had stopped that morning, but the air was thick with fog and mist. As the 2nd Minnesota moved forward towards the Mill Springs Road, Van Cleve's men came to a rail fence with an open field to their front. The Confederates were barely visible through the fog and mist, but their line of troops could be identified at about 20 or 30 yards distant in the field. Van Cleve ordered his men to commence firing, and within a few minutes the Confederate line had disappeared. The 2nd Minnesota, using the rail fence to define their "forward line of troops," quickly realized that the Confederates who had dispersed

actually constituted the Confederate second line of defense. The first line was still literally on the other side of the fence under the guns and noses of the 2nd Minnesota. The right flank of the 2nd Minnesota was now locked in hand-to-hand combat with the 20th Tennessee. The results of the repositioning was a surprise to both sides as the Confederates also had only limited visibility and did not see the 2nd Minnesota come up.²⁰ The weather was an additional disadvantage to the Confederates as the majority of the soldiers were armed with the old flintlock muskets which were largely unreliable in the rainy mist.²¹ The 2nd Minnesota gained the advantage by being able to gather their wits about them and fire first, causing the Confederate line immediately behind the fence to retreat. The remaining Confederates surrendered almost immediately to the 2nd Minnesota. Shortly thereafter, remnants of Confederate resistance were routed entirely when the 9th Ohio and a portion of the 2nd Minnesota conducted a bayonet charge.²²

By the end of the battle, Van Cleve's nine companies had experienced 12 men killed and 33 wounded. Among the trophies captured by Van Cleve's regiment was the battle flag of the 15th Mississippi. On the return trip to Louisville, the loyal ladies of Louisville presented a silk flag to Colonel Van Cleve with the inscription, "Mill Springs, January 19, 1862, 2nd Regiment Minnesota Volunteer Infantry."²³ The small battle at Mill Springs did not last more than 30 minutes for Colonel Van Cleve and his men.²⁴ Yet his regiment successfully engaged and drove the Confederates from the field, and Van Cleve earned a recognition from his brigade commander for the great valor and judgment displayed in the discharge of his duties.²⁵ Humble in his first victory,

he confessed to his wife that other commanders were painting an inaccurate picture by exaggerating the claims of their victory at Mill Springs in their final reports. Van Cleve apparently was satisfied with own his conduct and added that his men performed nobly; he also noted that he had gained a healthy respect for the fighting qualities of the southern soldier.²⁶

From Mill Springs, the 2nd Minnesota marched to Nashville where arrangements had been made for Buell's and Halleck's forces to consolidate at Savannah, Tennessee. On 21 March 1862, Van Cleve was promoted to Brigadier General, U.S. Volunteers.²⁷ On 21 July 1862, Van Cleve was given command of the 14th Brigade of the 5th Division. The 5th Division, the forerunner of the 3rd Division, Van Cleve's future command, was then commanded by Major General T. L. Crittenden. His fellow brigade commanders in the division at the time were Colonel Sam Beatty, commanding the 11th Brigade, and Colonel Stanley Matthews, commanding the 23rd Brigade.²⁸

While a brigade commander, Van Cleve's brigade undertook long marches with Buell's army through northern Alabama to seize Chattanooga. Van Cleve's brigade participated in the long marches back towards Louisville when General Bragg moved out of Chattanooga and threatened the Federal lines of communications. On 1 October 1862 while stationed in Louisville, Van Cleve took command of the 5th Division.²⁹ At the Battle of Perryville on 7 and 8 October 1862, Van Cleve and his division were held in reserve. Although able to observe the battle, Van Cleve and his unit did not actively participate in the fighting.

Within a month, on 24 October 1862, the Army of the Cumberland was reorganized into the Right, Left, and Center Wings. Van Cleve's division was assigned to the Left Wing, 14th Army Corps. The Army of the Cumberland then continued to pursue Bragg through Kentucky and then turned south to Nashville again.³⁰ The next significant action facing the Army of the Cumberland was the Battle of Stones River, which began on 31 December 1862.

At age 53, General Van Cleve's advancing age was readily apparent as he was balding and wore a gray beard. Evidence of his old age was complete with the small pair of wire-rimmed glasses he wore to help his failing eyesight. With this picture in mind, one could certainly surmise that Van Cleve did not possess the same "command presence" other leaders in the Army enjoyed, such as Rosecrans, Thomas, or Sheridan. Although Van Cleve was respected by his men for his genuine care and concern for their health and welfare, many were deceived into believing that he was just a simple old man who happened to command a division.³¹ His wife, raised in a military environment, might have played too influential a role and pushed her husband whom she referred to as "the General" beyond his own capabilities. However, Van Cleve was not so old and feeble and such a grandfather-like figure that he was incapable of *commanding* his division. Two incidents clearly illustrate his ability to make hard decisions in the interest of the wellbeing and discipline of his division.

In the first incident, Lieutenant Colonel Orville S. Hamilton, the regimental commander of the 86th Indiana, was relieved by Van Cleve for incompetency. Lieutenant Colonel Hamilton was not guilty of gross

misconduct or negligence, he was just lacking a God-given or book-learned ability to lead troops. The story of Hamilton's relief affords special insight into Van Cleve. Lieutenant Colonel Hamilton was an attorney with an apparent strong desire to reach a high level of command in the army. Several junior officers, untrusting of Hamilton's ability to command the 86th Indiana in battle, held a secret meeting to select one officer to be a spokesman to Van Cleve. This spokesman confronted Van Cleve and requested the relief of Hamilton, their commander. On the morning of 30 December 1862, just one day before the Battle of Stones River, the spokesman and the group went to talk to Van Cleve. The spokesman found Van Cleve in his tent and had barely blurted out the first sentence of his request before Van Cleve silenced the officer, telling him and his fellow officers to go back to their regiment. Before the party walked too far away, Van Cleve's orderly stopped the group and asked the spokesman to return to the General's tent. Van Cleve told the officer that "he would look after the interest of the regiment, and all would turn out for the best." Later the same day, as the division was formed in a line of battle, Van Cleve and his Assistant Adjutant General Captain Otis moved down the line of regiments. Stopping at each regiment, Van Cleve gave a command to each regimental commander. The commander was in turn expected to fully explain the command to his men and then have his men execute the movement. Upon reaching the 86th Indiana, Van Cleve commanded Lieutenant Colonel Hamilton to "change front forward on first company." Lieutenant Colonel Hamilton was unable to give the required command and instruction. Twice Van Cleve repeated the request, and with each request, Lieutenant Colonel

Hamilton became more and more unnerved. Finally, Van Cleve demanded the third time saying, "Colonel you must obey my orders; instruct your men how to execute the movement." With this, Hamilton broke down completely and handed over his sword and his command to the Adjutant.³² Van Cleve's method was probably the most effective means of relieving Hamilton. Because Hamilton was a lawyer with a grand design for himself in the army, relieving him by any method less than total humiliation in front of his own troops probably would have resulted in a violent protest. The ensuing bad feelings would have made life difficult for the troops and the entire command just before a major battle.

The second incident presents an entirely different picture of Van Cleve and causes the first incident to pale in comparison, for it reflects a much darker side to soldiering during the Civil War which rarely comes to surface. On 10 September 1862, Private William Minix, age 25, a member of Company A, 9th Kentucky Infantry, deserted his regiment³³ for the third time while the division was on the march to Louisville.³⁴ Later, Private Minix, found guilty of desertion, was sentenced to death by a firing squad. In response, Private Minix wrote this note to his commanding officer on 14 June 1863:

As you are doubtless aware I am sentenced to be shot on Tuesday next--others have also been sentenced the same as my selfe who have done much worse then my selfe and yet have been reprieve and I feel shure if you would intrest your selfe on my behalf my life might be saved and I will promase no swear if I escape that awful degrading death I will hence forth be a true and loyal and law abiding soldier may God help me for I cannot--help my selfe.³⁵

The note had virtually no impact on the sympathies of the chain of command or on their decision to carry out the punishment for desertion. On 16 June 1863 while encamped at Murfreesboro, General Van Cleve

formed his division into a three-sided square and positioned the condemned soldier at the open end of the square, sitting atop his coffin on a wagon.³⁶ Once the division was formed and all eyes were on Private Minix, the sentence was carried out, and Minix met his death by the firing squad. Afterwards, the entire division was marched by the coffin to view the dead body of the deserter.³⁷ According to an eyewitness from the 8th Kentucky,

. . . it was a sad and shocking scene for the soldiers of the division, causing a soldier to feel different from witnessing a true, brave comrade falling in battle.³⁸

Lieutenant Colonel Stratton, commander of the 19th Ohio added, "It's a horrible sight to see a fellow soldier shot in cold blood as it were."³⁹ The method of execution and the subsequent display of the body was standard practice throughout the war. In fact, from 1861-1867 there were a total of 267 recorded executions.⁴⁰ What makes this particular execution different is that General Van Cleve, possibly thought to be too soft-hearted an individual and unable to enforce standards or carry out punishment--albeit unthinkable in this day and age--commanded his division and made the hard decisions.

During the months leading up to Chickamauga, the more personal side of General Van Cleve is revealed through his letters to his wife. He was truly in love with his wife; he wrote practically every day whether it was only a quick line or a full-length letter describing the events of the day. Van Cleve, also very close to his staff, sometimes discussed the possible content of his letters to his wife with them and asked for their advice and input. His morale appeared to be good as his letters described the beautiful mountain scenery and the lack of

Confederate resistance to his division's movements. His letters do show a deep concern for the lives of his soldiers in an inherently risky business--even when the bullets were not flying. To relieve some of the daily stresses of command, he took time out to enjoy the sites and visited the point at which the states of Georgia, Tennessee, and Alabama are joined. He did, however, begin to complain to his wife of ill health at the beginning of the hard campaigning during the summer months of 1863. Specifically, Van Cleve named dysentery, lack of sleep, poor food, long marches, and hot weather as the main offenders to his wellbeing. On the whole, though, he seemed to be accepting of his troubles and the heavy responsibility which accompanied division command. He accepted all his sufferings as he felt bringing the nation together again was a just cause.⁴¹

General Van Cleve can be clearly considered a combat veteran as he entered the fight at Chickamauga. However, if Marshall Maurice de Saxe's criteria for a successful general officer are used--courage, intelligence, and health--to evaluate Van Cleve's potential, there are some nagging questions left unanswered. It is obvious that his physical courage in combat was unquestionable. He led from the front and did not shirk from a fight. His moral courage was also beyond reproach. He was not boastful nor was he prone to falsely exaggerate his performance in combat. He made hard decisions with the best interest of the division in mind. The execution of Private Minix and the relief of Lieutenant Colonel Hamilton are both excellent examples of the punishment General Van Cleve was capable of delivering when the discipline and well-being of his men were involved. Yet, one questions if his past experiences in

combat gave him the tactical skills to fully prepare him for the onslaught at Chickamauga. Did he have the mental agility to profit from lessons learned on earlier battlefields? At 53 years of age, was his own physical stamina capable to persevere against the rigors of hard campaigning and combat?

He commanded at regimental level in a battle of major significance but only gained minimal combat experience. Following the brief battle at Mill Springs, Van Cleve was a brigade commander, but his brigade was not involved in any combat actions other than possibly some minor skirmishing against the Confederates. As a division commander, his division remained in reserve and only observed the battle of Perryville. Finally, at Stones River, Van Cleve commanded for only a portion of the first day of the battle before a wound took him from the field. Van Cleve was nevertheless commended by both the corps commander and the Army commander for his actions in the first critical moments of the battle at Stones River. The commendation from both general officers also stated that Van Cleve should be promoted to major general based on the abilities he had displayed.⁴²

As the division marched to Chickamauga, Van Cleve might have suffered from the same problem facing officers from all armies in the initial stages of war: although officers rise steadily in rank and responsibility to fill the requirements of an expanding army, the same officers do not necessarily enjoy a corresponding rise in the level of experience or competence to adequately command and control a larger organization.

As Van Cleve directed his division closer to the Chickamauga battlefield, he learned that his old regiment was encamped in the vicinity of Chattanooga; and on 8 September 1863 he stopped by to visit his old friends from Minnesota. William Bircher, then a drummer boy with the regiment, recalls the visit by Van Cleve:

. . . the regimental band serenaded their former commander and the men and officers of the regiment still held the General in great respect and veneration.⁴³

The Staff of the 3rd Division

Captain E. A. Otis
Assistant Adjutant General

Otis was born in Calhoun County, Michigan, on 2 August 1835. He studied law in the summer of 1856 in Kalamazoo, Michigan, and graduated from the Poughkeepsie Law School in August 1857. After graduation, he went to St. Paul, Minnesota, where he commenced practice of his profession in partnership with his brother George L. Otis.

On 19 August 1861, he was commissioned a Lieutenant in the 2nd Regiment of Minnesota Volunteers. He was appointed aide-de-camp on the staff of Brigadier General Johnson who was commanding a brigade in General McCook's division in the Fall of 1861.

Otis remained with Johnson throughout the winter of 1861. He went to Nashville and then Pittsburgh Landing, where he participated in the Battle of Shiloh for which he was favorably mentioned by his superior officers for gallantry and good conduct. After the battle, he was promoted to captain, assistant adjutant general, and was assigned to Van Cleve's staff. He fought in the Battle of Stones River where he was again commended for bravery and good conduct.⁴⁴

Captain Carter B. Harrison
Division Inspector

Harrison was born in Northbend, Ohio, on 26 September 1840. At the outbreak of the War, he was a student at Miami University. He entered the service on 18 April 1861 as a private in a company of students raised at the university. He served with the company in West Virginia until expiration of his three-month enlistment. On 12 October 1861, he was appointed adjutant of the 31st Regiment Ohio Volunteer Infantry and served there until 20 November 1862, when he was appointed brigade inspector on the staff of 3rd Brigade. He was present at the Battle of Stones River and later promoted to captain. On 1 April 1863, Harrison was appointed acting assistant inspector general on the division staff.⁴⁵

Lieutenant Henry M. Williams
Aide-de-Camp

Williams was born in Fort Wayne, Indiana, on 24 January 1843. In 1862, he left the College of New Jersey (which is now Princeton), and entered the Army as a 2nd Lieutenant in the 11th Indiana Battery. On 7 October 1862, he was appointed aide-de-camp to General Van Cleve, and served in that position during the Battle of Stones River.⁴⁶

Captain Lucius H. Drury
Chief of Artillery

Drury was born at Highgate, Vermont, on 20 December 1825. Upon entering the Army from Wisconsin on 9 September 1861, he received a commission as captain of the 3rd Battery Wisconsin Artillery. On 18 October 1862, he was assigned as chief of artillery. However, during a reconnaissance-in-force conducted by the division on 13 September,

Captain Drury was seriously wounded. Captain George R. Swallow took the position of chief of artillery at Chickamauga.⁴⁷ Swallow wore two hats during the battle: he commanded his own battery and acted as the division's Chief of Artillery.

Major Samuel D. Turney
Medical Director

Turney was born in Columbus, Ohio, on 26 December 1826 and entered the service as a surgeon in the 13th Ohio on 2 May 1861. On 21 March 1863, he was appointed Surgeon and medical director of the division.⁴⁸

Captain Charles A. Sheafe
Provost Marshall

Sheafe was born in Somerset County, Maine, on 7 September 1832. He was a lawyer at the beginning of the War in Hillsborough, Ohio. Sheafe joined the Army on 26 January 1862 and was commissioned a captain in the 59th Ohio Regiment. He participated with his regiment through the Battles of Shiloh and Stones River.⁴⁹

Lieutenant Edward Knoble
Aide-de-Camp

Knoble was born in Memphis, Tennessee, on 7 December 1843. He joined the Army from Kentucky on 20 September 1861 and was commissioned 2nd lieutenant in the 21st Regiment Kentucky. On 20 October 1862, Knoble received the position of acting aide-de-camp for Colonel Stanley Matthews. After the Battle of Stones River, he received the appointment as aide-de-camp for Van Cleve.⁵⁰

Lieutenant W. H. H. Sheets
Ordnance Officer

Sheets was born in Indianapolis, Indiana, on 9 August 1840. He enlisted in the Army on 8 August 1862 and was later commissioned a 1st lieutenant in the 79th Indiana. Sheets served as aide-de-camp on Colonel Beatty's brigade staff. After Stones River, he was appointed to ordnance officer on General Van Cleve's staff.⁵¹

Captain T. Forrest Murdoch
Aide-de-Camp

Murdoch was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on 2 April 1841. He enlisted as a private in the "Petite Zouave Guard" on 18 April 1861. After three-months' service expired, he was commissioned as a 2nd lieutenant in the 13th Ohio. Murdoch was promoted to 1st lieutenant after Shiloh and detailed as aide-de-camp on General Van Cleve's staff prior to the Battle of Stones River.⁵²

In addition to the staff officers listed above, General Van Cleve had two additional staff officers: Captain A. K. Robinson, the topographical engineer, and Captain J. O. Strange, the commissary officer.⁵³ Every one of Van Cleve's staff officers were combat veterans by the time they fought at Chickamauga. Some were filling their position for the first time. For example, Captain Swallow was filling the post of the division chief of artillery due to the loss of Captain Drury a few days before the battle. Van Cleve made a reference in his after-action report that the loss of Captain Drury deprived the division of the valuable services of their chief of artillery.⁵⁴ In general, however, his staff can be deemed no better or worse when compared to other division staffs at Chickamauga. The division medical director was

singled out by Van Cleve for his skill, prudence, and industry for the prompt and efficient handling of their wounded during the battle. The others were all recognized by General Van Cleve for their faithfulness, courage, and devotion to duty.⁵⁵ Furthermore, and probably the best qualifier, the reputation of the division staff did not suffer from any discouraging remarks of poor staff work from the subordinate commands in the division.

Endnotes

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⁴⁸*Ibid.*

⁴⁹*Ibid.*

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 178.

⁵¹*Ibid.*

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CHAPTER 3
THE COMMANDERS AND REGIMENTS OF THE 3RD DIVISION

Four brave men who do not know each other will not dare to attack a lion. Four less brave, but knowing each other well, sure of their reliability and consequently of mutual aid, will attack resolutely. There is the science of the organization.

Ardant du Picq
from Battle Studies

Van Cleve, his commanders, and his soldiers met a lion at Chickamauga. On the afternoon of 19 September 1863, the lion came in the form of Confederate General Alexander P. Stewart's "Little Giant" Division.¹ On the 20th, the lion met Van Cleve's division in a breakthrough, lead by General James Longstreet's Corps.² The ability of the division to withstand the ferocious attacks depended in large measure on their faith in the capabilities of their leaders, their fellow soldiers, and the units to which they belonged. Every commander in the division had to be able to rely not only on the ability of his own unit, but also on the abilities of the unit to his left or right. He had to go into battle with the confidence that his flanks and rear were secured by experienced units and commanded by competent leaders. These concerns were no more than the individual soldier's concerns of the men to his immediate left and right.

The Commanders and Regiments of the
1st Brigade, 3rd Division

Commander, 1st Brigade, 3rd Division
Brigadier General Samuel Beatty

Sam Beatty was born in Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, on 16 December 1820. In 1829 the Beatty family moved to Stark County, Ohio and started a farm there in Jackson Township. Beatty spent the remainder of his life in Jackson Township, except for his service in the Mexican and Civil Wars. Beatty had very little formal education and no formal military education. He enlisted in the Army in 1846 and served a year as first lieutenant in Company K, 3rd Ohio Infantry during the Mexican War although he never experienced any actual combat. He went back to Ohio after the War and was elected sheriff of Stark County in 1857. He was then re-elected as sheriff in 1859. After Fort Sumter, President Lincoln issued his call for three-month volunteers. Beatty was elected captain of Company A, 19th Ohio Volunteer Infantry, on 27 April 1861 and a month later was elected colonel of the 19th Ohio on 29 May 1861. Upon activation, the regiment was immediately pressed into service in West Virginia.³

Beatty commanded the regiment in West Virginia during the Battle of Rich Mountain. He and his regiment were commended by General Rosecrans for

the cool and handsome manner in which it held its post against a flank attack, and for the manner in which it came into line and delivered its fire near the close of the action.

After West Virginia was secured, the regiment moved back to Ohio and re-enlisted for three years.⁴ The regiment then moved to Pittsburgh Landing and joined Buell's Army of the Ohio just prior to the Battle of

Shiloh in April 1862. At Shiloh, Beatty served as a brigade commander and was again commended in the official reports for his performance.⁵ The 19th Ohio was also involved in the siege of Corinth.

Beatty took command of the 11th Brigade, 5th Division on 27 May 1862.⁶ He was promoted to brigadier general of volunteers on 29 November 1862.⁷ He went on to command his brigade through the 31st of December, the first day of battle at Stones River, on which day he was made acting division commander due to Van Cleve's wounding.⁸ He commanded the division until 13 March 1863, when a recovered Van Cleve returned to the division.⁹ Under Beatty's command, the division received the onslaught of General Breckinridge's attack. After being heavily supported by artillery, the division conducted a counterattack, driving the Confederates from the field. General Beatty was once again commended for his actions as acting division commander at Stones River.¹⁰

Beatty was a combat veteran as he entered the fight at Chickamauga; he commanded troops and gained experience in combat at every level from company to division. He was a solid and dependable commander, gaining favorable recognition in practically every engagement or battle in which he was involved. Beatty developed tactics, techniques, and procedures for his own brigade. In Beatty's bayonet drill, his men were trained to fire a volley and then, before the smoke cleared, to initiate the bayonet charge at a run without the associated cheer.¹¹ His soldiers remarked that he was brave to a fault and did not hesitate to volunteer his men for a dangerous mission.¹² With the exception of his lack of formal military education, he was the most experienced and competent officer in the division.

9th Kentucky Volunteer Infantry
Colonel George H. Cram

The 9th Kentucky was organized on 26 November 1861, at Columbia, Kentucky,¹³ and registered a total of 1,135 officers and men into its ranks throughout the war.¹⁴ At Chickamauga, the regiment was commanded by Colonel George H. Cram.¹⁵ Cram, a combat veteran, was promoted through the ranks and took command of the regiment during the Battle of Stones River. He was an aggressive officer, commended for his actions at Shiloh and Stones River.¹⁶ At the Battle of Stones River, Colonel Grider, the assigned commander of the regiment, moved up to take command of the brigade, based on the chain of events precipitated by General Van Cleve's wounding.¹⁷ Colonel Grider later resigned his commission on 3 February 1863 after the Battle of Stones River.¹⁸

From its first engagement through the Battle of Stones River, the regiment continually proved itself to be capable in combat. The regiment's first engagement was at the Battle of Shiloh on 6-7 April 1862. At Shiloh, the 9th Kentucky was commended for its gallantry during a daring charge made during the battle. Colonel Cram, then a captain, participated in the charge and was wounded.¹⁹ During the Battle of Perryville in October 1862, the regiment was held in reserve. The men actively participated in the Battle of Stones River, losing 112 men: 22 killed, 87 wounded, and 3 missing.²⁰ Esprit de corps ran high in the regiment, and its performance in battle won the praise of the acting Division Commander Brigadier General Beatty for its actions on 2 January 1863 at the Battle of Stones River.²¹ Also while at Stones River, the color sergeant was killed, and the colors were rescued by a boy named Moses Roark. Roark carried the regimental colors throughout

the Battle of Stones River. Afterwards, he was promoted to color sergeant and continued to carry the regimental colors through every engagement in which the regiment participated until its deactivation.²² The 9th Kentucky was a combat veteran regiment as it headed for Chickamauga. The commander and the regiment operated as a well-oiled machine in combat.

17th Kentucky Infantry Regiment
Colonel Alexander M. Stout

The regiment was originally organized in November 1861 at Calhoon, Kentucky,²³ and numbered 1,499 officers and men throughout the war.²⁴ The 17th was commanded by Alexander M. Stout, a combat veteran who was severely wounded at Shiloh earlier in the war.²⁵ The original commander of the regiment Colonel John H. McHenry was discharged from the regiment after issuing an order to deliver slaves found in his lines back to their owners. Once the order reached the ears of President Lincoln, McHenry was dismissed from further service.²⁶ The dismissal allowed for Stout's promotion to colonel and command of the regiment on 5 December 1862.²⁷ Colonel Stout was a brave man and could repeat tactics verbatim, yet he could hardly issue even the simple commands for any troop movement. Therefore the men of the regiment always looked to Lieutenant Colonel Vaughan to command them in combat.²⁸

Upon its initial activation, the 17th was actively engaged within its own state, as there were many Confederate camps in the near vicinity.²⁹ During these early months, many men suffered from disease such as measles, colds, and pneumonia; in fact, many soldiers were so disabled by disease that they were eventually discharged from the

army.³⁰ The regiment participated in the capture of Fort Donelson, was an active participant in the battle of Shiloh, and was involved in some heavy skirmishing during the siege at Corinth. After the Battle of Shiloh, the 17th Kentucky was consolidated with the 25th Kentucky Regiment but maintained the designation of 17th Kentucky Volunteer Infantry.³¹ This combat veteran regiment did not join Van Cleve's division until 31 July 1863, and did not participate in the Battle of Stones River.³²

19th Ohio Volunteer Infantry
Lieutenant Colonel Henry G. Stratton

The 19th Ohio was originally organized for three months' service in May 1861,³³ after which the officers and men re-enlisted from 25 September to 1 January 1862 in Alliance, Ohio, for three years' service.³⁴ At Stones River, Stratton was the regimental senior captain. On the first day of battle, Stratton was severely wounded and left on the field for several hours without medical attention.³⁵ On 20 August 1863, after his recovery, Stratton was made acting commander while the Regimental Commander Colonel Charles Manderson and some of the junior officers returned to Ohio to recruit more volunteers for duty with the 19th Ohio.³⁶ Lieutenant Colonel Stratton was a combat veteran of many battles, yet was surprised by his promotions as he considered his small frame and long recuperation from his earlier wound at Stones River detrimental to his career.³⁷ Lieutenant Colonel Stratton commanded the regiment for the first time in battle at Chickamauga.³⁸

The 19th Ohio was initially ordered to West Virginia to push out Confederate forces and secure the region for the Union. While

assigned to General McClellan's Provisional Army of West Virginia, the regiment was commended by its Brigade Commander General Rosecrans for its performance at the Battle of Rich Mountain.³⁹ After re-enlisting for three years, the regiment occupied Columbia, Kentucky, where measles and typhoid fever raged among the men of the regiment. Within a few days, over 200 men were in the hospital and several deaths had resulted from the disease. Afterwards, the regiment moved south and was an active participant in the Battle of Shiloh. After Shiloh, the regiment participated in the siege of Corinth, then marched north and joined General Buell's Army of the Ohio marching to Louisville, Kentucky. Designated part of the reserve, the regiment observed the Battle of Perryville but was not actively involved.⁴⁰ However, during the Battle at Stones River, the 19th Ohio was heavily engaged and suffered a total loss of 186 men: 27 killed, 125 wounded, and 34 missing.⁴¹ By the time the 19th Ohio reached the Chickamauga battlefield, it was a combat veteran regiment.

79th Indiana Volunteer Infantry Regiment
Colonel Fred Knefler

The 79th Indiana was organized 20 August to 2 September 1862 at Indianapolis, Indiana,⁴² and was commanded by Colonel Fred Knefler. Knefler was born in Hungary on 12 April 1834, where he received a good education and was taught the basics of military drill. As a young cadet in active service, he fought with other Hungarians for their freedom. It was while serving in Hungary that Knefler obtained the practical knowledge of the duties and discipline required of soldiers. This knowledge later greatly benefited him as he became an officer in the

Union Army. Immigrating to the United States in 1850, he worked as a carpenter and then as a clerk. He learned to speak English by studying Shakespeare and reading The New York Tribune.

Knefler was initially assigned to the 11th Indiana Volunteer Infantry and selected by General Lew Wallace to be his adjutant general. In August 1862, he was appointed colonel of the 79th Indiana Volunteers.⁴³

The regiment was held in reserve during the Battle of Perryville and was still considered a "green" regiment at Stones River.⁴⁴ In that battle, the regiment suffered a loss of 89 of the 331 personnel present for duty: 11 killed, 42 wounded, and 36 missing.⁴⁵ In his final report, Colonel Knefler expressed his appreciation to the officers and men of the 19th Ohio for setting an example and allowing his own 79th Indiana to observe first-hand how a regiment should fight and control themselves in battle.⁴⁶ Knefler was satisfied that his "green troops" gained valuable combat experience at Stones River.

B Battery, 26 Pennsylvania Independent Artillery
Captain A. J. Stevens and
First Lieutenant S. M. McDowell

On 6 November 1861, B Battery was mustered into service at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania,⁴⁷ for three years' service and was commanded by Alanson J. Stevens.

Originally, the order for recruiting the 77th Pennsylvania Infantry Regiment required a regiment consisting of eight companies of infantry and only one battery of artillery. A portion of the battery was recruited in Franklin County, but not having the required strength, the men were consolidated with another battery recruited in Erie County,

Pennsylvania. Upon consolidation, the battery was sent to Louisville, and there it was instructed and drilled on the cannon. Before the year was out, the battery was detached from the 77th Infantry Regiment and became known as Independent Battery B, 26th Pennsylvania. B Battery, although moving towards Shiloh, did not arrive on the field until the battle was over. The battery joined the 5th Division in June 1862 and participated in the siege of Corinth and was held in reserve with the rest of the division during the Battle of Perryville. The battery also participated in the Battle of Stones River, where the men were complimented by General Rosecrans for their gallantry in action.⁴⁸ The battery and its commander were experienced veterans who were more than capable of providing adequate supporting fires for their brigade at Chickamauga.

The Commander and Regiments of the
2nd Brigade, 3rd Division

Commander, 2nd Brigade, 3rd Division
Colonel George Frederick Dick

George Dick, a man of German descent, was born in Tiffin, Ohio, on 22 February 1829. His father held a government office in Bavaria but left for America during the Prussian Revolution of 1826. When he was two years old, the Dick family moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, where George was educated in the Cincinnati public school system. Although not considered an educated man by his peers, he read the better books available at the time and was always thoroughly informed on current events. He had a deep interest in military organizations, and at age 16 was chosen captain in a juvenile military company known as the "Cincinnati Cadets."

Prior to the war, he was a quiet citizen of the town, devoted entirely to his tobacco trade business. He did not have many close friends and was not a boastful person, but these qualities did not preclude his ability to lead troops or diminish his other natural soldier-like qualities. His greatest gift was his ability to read and understand the limits of each officer and man in his regiment.

After President Lincoln called for three-month volunteers, George Dick started raising a company and was chosen as a commander for a three-months' company. Eventually in July 1861, George Dick and his company were mustered into active service for three years' service as Company D, 20th Indiana Volunteer Infantry.

While he was company commander, Dick's regiment was sent to Maryland and assigned to the Army of the Potomac. In September 1861, the regiment moved to Hatteras Inlet, North Carolina. There, Captain Dick was engaged in his first fight, and his regiment was forced out of its position due to the overwhelming numbers of Confederate troops. Afterwards, Captain Dick was sent to Newport News where he participated with the regiment in an engagement between the CSS Merrimac, USS Cumberland, and the USS Congress on 8 March 1862. On 10 May, his regiment participated in the capture of Norfolk, Virginia.

Subsequently, Captain Dick participated with the rest of his regiment in many battles of the Eastern Theater. His regiment fought in the Battle of Fair Oaks, and on 25 June 1862, it was engaged in the Battle of the Orchards. The 20th Indiana participated in all the battles of the Peninsula Campaign, covering the retreat of the 3rd Corps after the Seven Days Battles. After returning to Alexandria, Virginia,

the regiment participated in Second Bull Run and was engaged at the Battle of Chantilly on 1 September 1862.

Captain Dick was promoted to Major on 30 August 1862, just prior to the Battle of Chantilly. He continued to serve in the regiment as a major until 23 October 1862, when he was commissioned lieutenant colonel and then assigned to the 86th Indiana Infantry on 17 November 1862. Colonel Dick brought a vast amount of experience and understanding of the duties of a soldier. What he found in the 86th Indiana was more or less a rabble without drill or discipline. The discipline of the Army of the Potomac under McClellan served Lieutenant Colonel Dick well as he began to whip the 86th Indiana into shape.

He was to make, by strict discipline and thorough drill, a body of soldiers out of the raw material then organized into what was called a regiment.⁴⁹

He took command of the regiment at the Battle of Stones River, replacing a commander relieved for incompetence. This change was for the better, as

new life was infused, new hopes were inspired, and an ambition took complete hold of all to do something, to be something, to make a record of soldiers, that had not before existed with the great mass of the officers and men.⁵⁰

Colonel Dick assumed command of the 2nd Brigade on 5 July 1863.⁵¹ Even though he was a combat veteran, Chickamauga was his first experience leading a brigade in combat.⁵²

13th Regiment Ohio Volunteer Infantry
Lieutenant Colonel Elhannon M. Mast
and Captain H. G. Cosgrove

The regiment was originally organized on 30 April 1861 for three months' service at Columbus, Ohio,⁵³ and then reorganized for three years' service from 12 to 26 June 1861 at Camp Denison, Ohio.⁵⁴

The regiment initially marched east and participated in several engagements against Confederate forces in West Virginia. Afterwards, they moved back to Ohio and re-enlisted for three years.⁵⁵ At the Battle of Shiloh, the 13th Ohio was commended for capturing guns from the famous Washington Artillery of New Orleans.⁵⁶ From there, the regiment participated in the Battle of Stones River, suffering losses of 29 killed, 79 wounded, and 77 missing for a total loss of 185 men.⁵⁷ The regiment was composed of combat veterans by the time they reached the Chickamauga battlefield.

The 13th Ohio was the most unfortunate regiment in the division with regard to losing commanders. The regularly assigned commander, Dwight Jarvis, was on temporary duty at McMinnville, and the regiment was commanded by an acting commander at Chickamauga. The acting commander, Lieutenant Colonel Elhannon M. Mast, was killed the first day of the battle. Command of the regiment then passed to the regimental senior captain, H. G. Cosgrove. Similarly, at the Battle of Stones River, the regimental commander, Colonel Hawkins, was killed on the first day of battle. Also, Mast, then a captain in command of a company, was wounded at Stones River.⁵⁸

44th Regiment Indiana Volunteers
Colonel Simeon C. Aldrich

The 44th Indiana was organized at Fort Wayne, Indiana, on 24 October 1861.⁵⁹ Colonel Simeon C. Aldrich commanded the regiment at Chickamauga. He was originally from Vermont but had moved to Pleasant Lake, Indiana, in 1844. Aldrich operated his own business and later served as the county sheriff for several years.⁶⁰ He left Indiana for California in 1860, but he returned to Indiana at the start of the war to raise a company of volunteers.⁶¹

Aldrich was promoted through the ranks of the 44th Indiana and commended for his performance as a field-grade officer at Stones River.⁶² Though a combat veteran, Aldrich gained his first combat experience as a regimental commander at Chickamauga. Colonel William C. Williams, the regimental commander at Stones River, was captured during the massive attack by the Confederates on 2 January and later resigned his commission on 12 May 1863 after his parole.⁶³

The regimental history began with its participation in the sieges and captures of Forts Henry and Donelson.⁶⁴ While at Fort Donelson, the regiment captured a Confederate battle flag. At the battle of Shiloh, the regiment acquired the nickname "Iron Men" for their hard-fighting ability.⁶⁵ The regiment also participated in the siege of Corinth and was held in reserve during the Battle of Perryville.⁶⁶ At Stones River, the 44th Indiana lost a total of 113 men: 10 killed, 56 wounded, and 47 missing.⁶⁷ This combat veteran regiment was trusted on the battlefield and played a vital role for the Army on Snodgrass Hill in the final chapter of Chickamauga.

59th Ohio Volunteer Infantry
Lieutenant Colonel Granville A. Frambes

The 59th Ohio was organized on 1 October 1861, in Ripley, Ohio.⁶⁸ Lieutenant Colonel William Howard commanded the regiment at Stones River but resigned his commission after that battle on 25 February 1863.⁶⁹ The command of the regiment then fell to Granville A. Frambes.⁷⁰ Frambes controlled a portion of the regiment at Stones River and was commended for his performance, but Chickamauga was his first experience in battle commanding a regiment.⁷¹

The regiment's first assignment was to quell a potential uprising by Confederate sympathizers at Maysville, Kentucky.⁷² While assigned to General Buell's Army, the regiment was an active participant at the Battle of Shiloh. After Shiloh, the regiment moved with the army to Corinth and participated in the skirmishes in and around the town. During the Battle of Perryville, the 59th Ohio was part of the reserve.⁷³ The 59th Ohio lost 3 killed, 37 wounded, and 45 missing of an original strength of 291 officers and men at the battle of Stones River.⁷⁴ This regiment is also considered to have been a combat veteran outfit.

86th Regiment Indiana Volunteers
Major Jacob C. Dick

The 86th Indiana was organized during the month of August 1861 at LaFayette, Indiana.⁷⁵ Major Jacob C. Dick commanded the regiment at Chickamauga. This was his first battle as a regimental commander. His only experience in battle thus far had been as a captain in command of a company in the Battle of Stones River,⁷⁶ during which he was wounded on the first day.⁷⁷

Originally, the regiment was sent to Cincinnati in response to the threat posed there by Confederate General Kirby Smith. Between the autumn of 1861 and the Battle at Stones River in December 1863, the regiment did a lot of marching. As one member reflected,

The regiment was gaining a good geographical knowledge of the country, but not much information of the art of war; this was to be learned thereafter, on other fields.⁷⁸

The regiment did play a vital role at Stones River, losing 34 killed, 59 wounded, and 101 missing,⁷⁹ as well as their regimental colors. An equally hard loss came to the regiment in July 1863, when their commander of seven months, Colonel George Dick, was given command of the 2nd Brigade.⁸⁰

7th Indiana Battery, Light Artillery
Captain George R. Swallow

The 7th Indiana was mustered into service at Indianapolis, Indiana, on 2 December 1861. The original commander of the battery was Captain Samuel J. Harris. The battery was initially assigned to General Nelson's division of General Buell's Corps. The battery did not participate in the Battle at Shiloh, arriving on the field too late to participate. After that battle, Captain Harris resigned but eventually rejoined the army and commanded the 19th Indiana Battery.⁸¹ General Beatty later singled out Harris's battery (19th Indiana) as responsible for the artillery fratricides of his brigade which Beatty believed to have precipitated the disorderly retreat of the division on the 19th of September 1863.⁸² Lieutenant Swallow was promoted to captain upon Harris's resignation and given command of the battery. The battery then participated in the siege at Corinth and was part of the reserve at

Perryville. After Perryville, the 7th Indiana was assigned to Van Cleve's division and participated in the Battle of Stones River, where it was commended by General Van Cleve: "The 7th Indiana Battery, Captain Swallow, joined us on an open field, and rendered efficient aid." The battery was severely engaged during the whole fight and lost four killed and eight wounded.⁸³ The battery commander and his men were experienced in combat before their arrival on the field at Chickamauga.

The Commander and Regiments of the
3rd Brigade, 3rd Division

Commander, 3rd Brigade, 3rd Division
Colonel Sidney M. Barnes

Sidney M. Barnes was born in Estill County, Kentucky, on 10 May 1820. He married Elizabeth Mize on 28 September 1841, and their union bore five children by the start of the war. Their oldest son Thomas also joined the Army and by the end of the war had risen to the rank of Major in the 47th Kentucky Volunteer Infantry. At the beginning of the War, Sidney M. Barnes was 40 years of age and had been an attorney-at-law, a member of the Kentucky State Legislature,⁸⁴ and the owner of a local "watering hole" called "Estill Springs." Barnes raised and was later elected to command the 8th Regiment Kentucky Volunteer Infantry.⁸⁵ He was known to be an excellent speaker and apparently was a handsome man in uniform. It was said that "on the parade ground with other officers he was the finest looking man in the group."⁸⁶

After being mustered into service, Colonel Barnes marched his regiment from Estill Springs to Lebanon, Kentucky. The regiment was initially attached to the 16th Brigade and later to the 23rd Brigade. Speaking ability notwithstanding, Barnes did have to learn the art of

leadership the hard way. The regiment did not have sufficient tentage or cold weather equipment to protect the men while conducting their first road marches during the winter months of 1861. Consequently, throughout their marches the men were recklessly exposed to snow and freezing rain, causing numerous casualties. One day became particularly miserable for the 8th Kentucky due to the heavy rains and mud encountered along the way. That night Barnes allowed his soldiers to fill their canteens with whisky in order to ward off the bad effects of the weather. The next day, many men of the regiment fell out of the road march due to the "well-meant" kindness of the Colonel.⁸⁷ The men of the regiment learned through this and other small incidents that the slightest provocation would lead Colonel Barnes to swear "equal to any teamster."⁸⁸

In the summer of 1862, Colonel Barnes and his regiment guarded the railroad from Murfreesboro to Chattanooga. The Confederate Army seemed to be nonexistent to the men of the regiment. They spent many a mile chasing after the elusive enemy but rarely engaged them in actual combat. By the fall of 1862, these soldiers resented the fact that they had been soldiering for nearly 12 months yet few of them had actually seen an armed rebel.⁸⁹ In October 1862, under further reorganization, Barnes' regiment was assigned to the 5th Division commanded by Van Cleve.⁹⁰ The regiment moved with Van Cleve's division towards Perryville; however, the division was held in reserve throughout the entire battle.

After the Battle of Perryville, the men in Barnes' regiment were understandably concerned for their families as the Southern army,

marching on Kentucky soil, was wiping the countryside clean of food and livestock. Many of the men had families in the vicinity of the "Southern occupation" and were concerned for their families' welfare during the coming winter months. At the beginning of November, the Army began to move south again, and the men were anxious and grumbling for time off to check on their families. Colonel Barnes appealed to the company officers to help persuade the men to remain faithful to the regiment. He promised to use his influence to gain furloughs for the married men. Barnes later personally appealed to General T. L. Crittenden on his men's behalf, but he was turned down. Morale plummeted in the regiment only to worsen when Mrs. Barnes arrived in camp within a few days for a visit with her husband. The end result was a small mutiny in the 8th with over 50 men leaving the ranks. However, all returned within two weeks and after petitioning the division and corps commanders were fully reinstated, thus ending the mutiny.⁹¹

On 7 December 1862, Colonel Barnes took a leave of absence to return to his home. He requested the leave in order to take care of his kidney disease, skin disease, and rheumatism. His family was also suffering from severe financial distress, and he needed the time to straighten out his business obligations.⁹² His extended leave caused him to miss the engagement at Dobbins Ford and the Battle of Stones River. Barnes did not return to the regiment until 18 January 1863.⁹³

Colonel Barnes was given command of the 3rd Brigade on 14 April 1863,⁹⁴ even though he was easily one of the most inexperienced senior officers in the division. He had never commanded a regiment in battle, much less a brigade. Nevertheless, he had only the experience of

several skirmishes under his belt as a regimental commander and nothing more as the opening shots are fired at Chickamauga.

8th Kentucky Volunteer Infantry
Lieutenant Colonel James B. Mayhew
Major John S. Clark

The regiment was organized in Estill County in the Fall of 1861,⁹⁵ numbering 1,033 officers and men throughout the war.⁹⁶ The regiment was raised chiefly from the mountain counties of Kentucky and was "composed of men who were distinguished for their unflinching bravery and patriotism."⁹⁷ The regiment was originally commanded by Colonel Sidney M. Barnes.⁹⁸ At Stones River, the regiment was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Reuben May while Barnes was absent on leave.⁹⁹ After Stones River, Lieutenant Colonel May was given command of the 7th Kentucky Infantry on 8 May 1863.¹⁰⁰ Thus, by the time the regiment arrived at Chickamauga, the command of the regiment had fallen to James B. Mayhew. Mayhew gained combat experience at Stones River, but Chickamauga was Mayhew's first chance to wear the rank of a regimental commander in combat.¹⁰¹ Lieutenant Colonel Mayhew was known for his harsh treatment of soldiers for even the slightest infraction of the rules. Anyone found guilty of misconduct was strung up by his thumbs for hours at a time.¹⁰² Mayhew was captured on the first day of fighting at Chickamauga, and the regiment was commanded by Major John S. Clark during the second day of the battle.

After the muster, the regiment received its entire outfit of camp and garrison equipment and older, altered muskets for their weapons.¹⁰³ The officers were immersed in study of war and drill daily.¹⁰⁴ Both the future commander Lieutenant Colonel Mayhew and his regiment

gained valuable combat experience while fighting at Stones River. The regiment played an active role both at the engagement of Dobbins Ford and at the Battle of Stones River. At Stones River, the regiment suffered a loss of 110 personnel: 19 killed, 64 wounded, and 27 missing.¹⁰⁵ The regiment was commended for its gallant and heroic performance during the battle.¹⁰⁶ Those experiences helped sustain the new commander and the regiment through some hard times at Chickamauga.

21st Kentucky Volunteer Infantry
Colonel S. W. Price

The 21st Kentucky was formed and mustered into service at Green River Bridge, Kentucky, from 31 December 1861 to 2 January 1862,¹⁰⁷ recruiting a total of 939 officers and men throughout the war.¹⁰⁸ The regiment, able to trace its lineage back to the War of 1812, was nicknamed "old Infantry," and was initially commanded by Captain S. W. Price. The subsequent commander died of natural causes within a few months of the regiment's muster, and Captain Price was reappointed as regimental commander.¹⁰⁹ Colonel Price took command of the 3rd Brigade during the Battle of Stones River in order to temporarily replace the injured commander Colonel Stanley Matthews.¹¹⁰ During the first day of battle at Stones River, Colonel Price and General Rosecrans had their now famous exchange of words on the necessity of Price's brigade to guard and hold McFadden's Ford, securing the Federal left flank. Colonel Price was arguably the only officer in the 3rd Brigade with enough experience to command at brigade level.¹¹¹ Yet for some reason, command of the brigade was handed to the inexperienced Colonel Barnes.

Held in reserve at Whiteside, Colonel Price and his regiment sat out the Battle of Chickamauga.¹¹²

The 21st Kentucky participated as part of the reserve during the Battle of Perryville but played an important role at Stones River with a total loss to the regiment of 55 personnel: 6 killed, 39 wounded, and 10 missing.¹¹³ The regiment also participated in several small engagements prior to Chickamauga. The combat-experienced regiment and commander were sorely missed by Rosecrans during the Battle of Chickamauga.¹¹⁴

35th Regiment (1st Irish) Indiana Volunteers
Major John P. Dufficy

The 35th Indiana was organized in Indianapolis, Indiana, on 11 December 1861.¹¹⁵ The regiment was under the temporary command of Major John P. Dufficy at Chickamauga¹¹⁶ while the regimental commander Colonel B. F. Mullen was in Indianapolis trying to recruit Irish Confederate prisoners of war for volunteer service with the 35th.¹¹⁷ Dufficy was a captain and in command of a company at Stones River just nine months earlier, for which he was commended for his distinguished gallantry.¹¹⁸ Although Dufficy was experienced in combat in the junior grades, he did not possess the breadth of experience required of a regimental commander in the hard fighting at Chickamauga.

The 35th Indiana Volunteer Regiment, also known as the "First Irish Regiment," was made up completely of Irishmen from Indiana. On 13 December 1861, the regiment departed for Kentucky, joined Buell's army, and moved on to Nashville. On 23 May 1862, the regiment consolidated with the 61st Indiana Regiment, which was also known as the "Second

Irish Regiment." The commander of the 61st Indiana (2nd Irish) Lieutenant Colonel Mullen was promoted to Colonel and took command of the consolidated regiment.¹¹⁹ In September 1862, the 35th was assigned to the 3rd Brigade of Van Cleve's division.¹²⁰ Its first battle as a consolidated regiment was at Perryville, but the regiment participated only as part of the reserve, never seeing any action. Later, Mullen led the regiment through Stones River and was wounded during the battle. At Stones River, the regimental losses were 87 personnel: 30 killed, 57 wounded, and zero missing.¹²¹

The first combat experience for the regiment occurred at the engagement at Dobbins Ford near Lavergne on 9 December 1862. During the brief clash with Confederate cavalry, the 35th lost its first men in combat: 5 killed and 35 wounded.¹²² By September 1863, the regiment had gained valuable experience in combat.

51st Regiment Ohio Volunteer Infantry
Colonel Richard W. McClain
Lieutenant Charles H. Wood

The 51st Ohio was organized from 9 September to 12 October 1861 at Camp Meigs, Ohio, for three years' service.¹²³ The regiment was commanded by combat-experienced Colonel Richard McClain. McClain was wounded and captured in the closing episodes of the Battle at Chickamauga on the twentieth¹²⁴ and later resigned his commission on 30 September 1864 after repatriation.¹²⁵

The 51st Ohio was experienced in combat prior to Chickamauga. The regiment participated as a reserve at the Battle of Perryville and was involved in some skirmishing with Wheeler's Confederate cavalry on 9 November 1862 at Dobbins Ford.¹²⁶ While fighting at Stones River with

the 3rd Division, the regiment lost 190 personnel: 24 killed, 122 wounded and 44 missing.¹²⁷

99th Ohio Volunteer Infantry
Colonel Peter T. Swaine

The 99th Ohio was organized 26 October 1862 at Camp Lima, Ohio.¹²⁸ The men of this regiment were mostly stalwart, hardy farmers.¹²⁹

The regiment was commanded at its inception by Colonel Peter T. Swaine. He was an 1847 graduate of West Point, ranking 24th of 44 in his class.¹³⁰ He was commissioned second lieutenant in the 1st Infantry Regiment on 1 July 1852, and served in garrison duty at Fort Columbus, New York. Promoted to second lieutenant on 31 December 1852, Lieutenant Swaine served on the frontier in Texas from 1852 to 1855. He was promoted to first lieutenant while in the 10th Infantry on 3 March 1855 and served at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. He then moved back to frontier duty for three years at Fort Snelling, Minnesota. Just prior to the outbreak of war, Swaine served at Fort Ridgely in the Utah Expedition and had a short stint in recruiting service.

Swaine was made a captain of the 15th U.S. Infantry on 14 May 1861. As a battalion commander, he was commended for his performance and promoted to major on 7 April 1862 for "gallant and meritorious services" at the Battle of Shiloh.¹³¹ For a brief period of time, he was given command of 2nd Brigade, 1st Division, Department of the Ohio, which later became 2nd Brigade, 3rd Division, Army of Kentucky. He voluntarily relinquished command of that brigade to go back to command his own regiment on learning that it was "badly in need of instruction."¹³²

Colonel Swaine was the only regular army officer in senior level command in the division. He was wounded at Stones River on the final day during Breckinridge's attack.¹³³ Swaine was a combat veteran leading an experienced regiment into Chickamauga.

The 99th Ohio had an inglorious beginning. Its first combat experiences were against John Morgan's cavalry. The regiment participated in an engagement to disrupt a raid by Morgan's cavalry. The Federal brigade was successful, causing Morgan's men to break off the raid with only a few captured wagons for booty. Yet Morgan's mischief was not finished as Morgan and his cavalry followed the Federal detachment on its return march. Morgan succeeded in capturing about one hundred stragglers who were unable to keep up with the brigade. About 20 of these stragglers belonged to the 99th Ohio.¹³⁴ The regiment's only experience in battle came at Stones River where they suffered a loss of 91 of their 369 men: 12 killed, 43 wounded, and 36 missing.¹³⁵

3rd Wisconsin Battery
First Lieutenant Cortland Livingston

Also known as "the Badger Battery," the 3rd Wisconsin Battery was composed of remarkably large, athletic men¹³⁶ and was organized at Berlin, Wisconsin, on 6 September 1861.¹³⁷ Lucius Drury, later the commander of the battery, assembled a large crowd with fife and drum players on a street corner in Wisconsin and immediately offered his services to the government. He addressed the crowd so convincingly that the citizens in the crowd decided to enroll in the battery.¹³⁸

During the month of November, the cannons and the equipment arrived as well as the men's uniforms. Then followed the practice of

standing gun drill and target practice, both which were conducted on the ice on Lake Michigan.¹³⁹ The organization left Wisconsin on 23 January 1862 for Louisville, Kentucky, joining General Buell's army at Nashville, Tennessee. From Nashville, the battery proceeded to fight in the Battle of Shiloh. The 3rd Wisconsin also participated in the siege and capture of Corinth, where the battery suffered a significant loss of men because of the swampy nature of the country which was a breeding ground for fevers and other fatal diseases.¹⁴⁰ The battery was held in reserve during the Battle of Perryville.

Captain Drury was appointed chief of artillery on Van Cleve's staff early in January 1863, leaving First Lieutenant Cortland Livingston, a combat veteran, in charge of a combat veteran battery at Chickamauga.¹⁴¹

Summary of the 3rd Division Units

Overall, the division appears similar to all other divisions assigned to the Army of the Cumberland at the time. The ranks of the division were filled with officers and men who were immigrants or sons of immigrants, farmers, mountainmen, lawyers, lawmen, businessmen, and West Pointers. Many joined for no other purpose than the honorable notion that they would lay down their life to bring the South back under the same flag. The backgrounds and the qualities each regiment brought to the fight at Chickamauga were as varied as the background and qualities of the men who composed them. For each of the regiments that had history written all over their colors with the names of their important battles, there were almost as many regiments which were as green and untried as when they joined the division in December 1862.

Yet the division drew blood together at Stones River, and with the exception of one regiment, all had at least a base of common experiences from which to draw. It is important to keep in mind the tremendous losses the regiments suffered at Stones River. The official casualty lists record the brigade losses at 34 percent for the 1st Brigade and 36 percent for the 2nd Brigade, while the 3rd Brigade lost 19 percent of its officers and men.¹⁴² New men were recruited to fill the ranks and were forced to adjust to army life quickly.

The losses suffered in the leader ranks were just as vital as the turnover of personnel in the enlisted ranks. The division commander, General Van Cleve, had not gained the experiences in combat of which many of his junior commanders could boast. In his first fight with his division, he was actively engaged for less than a day before a wound kept him off the field for three months.

The 1st Brigade, already assigned the bulk of combat veteran regiments, enjoyed the steady leadership of General Sam Beatty. Beatty's brigade had an additional advantage of stability; for over 16 months, three of the four regiments in the brigade had fought side by side under Beatty. Even though two of the commanders led regiments for the first time at Chickamauga, they had the strong hand of its brigade commander to guide them. General Beatty had seen the worst of times in combat, and he was the "rock" Van Cleve could lean on during the swirling first day of battle at Chickamauga. The 19th Ohio had a right to be proud of its hometown boy who had achieved general officer rank and who continued to build a reputation in combat that other senior officers in the division might have envied.

The 2nd Brigade could brag that their new commander had fought against General Lee and the tougher Confederates in the east. Colonel Dick fought in more major battles and was more battlewise than any other commander in the division, yet Colonel Dick was new to brigade command. The commanders and units of the 2nd Brigade were all combat veterans, with the exception of the 86th Indiana which had only the experience gained at Stones River from which to draw. The other three regiments had served together in the division since April 1862 and were familiar with the personalities of the regiments. However, just like their brigade commander, every single one of the commanders would command a regiment for the first time in battle at Chickamauga. Combat would take on a whole new meaning for these men there.

The 3rd Brigade, the largest brigade of the division with five regiments, also contained the greenest regiments in the division. The regiments comprising the 3rd Brigade did not join the division until August and September of 1862. For all of them, Stones River was their first taste of real battle. Two of the regimental commanders were new to command at Chickamauga, and the most experienced of all five, Colonel Price, was held in reserve at Whitesides. Unfortunately the new Brigade Commander Colonel Sidney Barnes had even less combat experience than most of his junior officers. He was not on the field at Stones River, and before the Battle of Chickamauga, he had rarely heard a shot fired in anger.

In the months and weeks prior to Chickamauga, the men enjoyed very high morale across the division. During the Spring, General Rosecrans corrected many of the supply problems. Men were happy to turn

in their Austrian rifles for the much preferred Enfield. Monthly pay was a bit more regular than had been the case earlier in the war. The men were well fed through foraging, living off the numerous "Union" families in the region or through their own supply system. Drill was conducted practically every day resulting in a high level of training for the men. The officers even had Officer Professional Development classes on Casey's tactics.¹⁴³ The Assistant Adjutant of the Division Captain Otis remarked after having witnessed troops from England, France, and Germany that Rosecrans commanded an army which was at least equal to any army in the world in terms of bravery, discipline, intelligence, and efficiency.¹⁴⁴

Probably the biggest morale booster was the success in combat enjoyed by the Army of the Cumberland during the prior nine months. Spirits soared even higher when in July 1863 the Confederate armies sustained two massive defeats--one in the east and one the west--giving more credence to the belief among soldiers that the collapse of the South was imminent. The men began to witness first-hand the high level of desertions from Bragg's army; indeed, Bragg's army seemed to melt away with each mile the Army of the Cumberland advanced. The men of Van Cleve's division could feel the beginning of the end of the war. The thoughts of the men were similar to those of Private Moses F. Yoder of the 51st Ohio who wrote to his brother on 16 July, "Bragg is I guess done played out,"¹⁴⁵ and Private Edwin Perkins of the 59th Ohio who wrote to his parents on 9 September, "We are whitling the littel end of the stick now."¹⁴⁶

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CHAPTER 4
THE EXPERIENCES OF THE DIVISION BEFORE CHICKAMAUGA

Boys, this is the New Year; many of you will
never see the sun go down today.

Father Cooney
Chaplain, 35th Indiana
1 January 1863

General Van Cleve's division was formally designated the 3rd Division, 21st Corps on 9 January 1863.¹ With the exception of the 17th Kentucky Infantry which joined the division at Murfreesboro in June 1863, the division organization was complete well before 5 October 1862 when General Van Cleve took command of the unit from General Thomas L. Crittenden. However, as the division faced the Battle of Stones River, it was untested and untried in combat as a complete organization. From the few weeks prior to the Battle of Stones River up to the Battle at Chickamauga, the capabilities of the division's leaders and men steadily evolved into the fighting force that faced the Confederate Army at Chickamauga in September 1863.

It was on 9 December 1862 that this evolution began when the 3rd Brigade, commanded by Colonel Stanley Matthews, was ordered to go into the neutral area between the two armies on a foraging expedition.² The 8th and 21st Kentucky Regiments, the 35th Indiana Regiment, and the 51st Ohio Regiment escorted a wagon train across Mill Creek at Lavergne, Tennessee, and crossed at Dobbins' Ford. As the soldiers loaded the wagons with corn from two nearby farms, Wheeler's cavalry struck the 3rd

Brigade. The Confederate cavalry, estimated to be at least regimental strength, drove in the pickets from the 51st Ohio. Colonel Matthews ordered the 35th Indiana to help extract the 51st Ohio while he sent the wagons to the rear. The cavalry attack was successfully parried and the Confederates then opted to ambush the expedition in a cedar thicket along the return route. The trap was sprung, and the Confederates inflicted heavy losses on the green and untried brigade, although the wagons did return safely to the division. In the engagement, Colonel Matthews was thrown from his horse and seriously injured.³ At the end of the day, the brigade's losses at the hands of Wheeler's cavalry was 12 killed, 57 wounded, and 4 men taken prisoner.

From this encounter, the brigade received its "baptism by fire;" the brigade was involved in its first engagement and suffered its first substantial losses in combat. Additionally, the brigade commander eventually resigned from the army due to the injuries sustained that day, passing command of the brigade to Colonel S. W. Price of the 21st Kentucky. Secondly, the 99th Ohio was absent from the expedition and seemingly did not earn a seat at the "veterans' table" until after the battle at Stones River. Lastly, several days after the engagement, the men of the brigade were complimented for their outstanding marksmanship while on picket duty. The compliment came from a reliable source: a Confederate picket and a member of the cavalry unit which conducted the attack.⁴

General Rosecrans' plan for destroying Bragg's army at Murfreesboro was to be initiated by General Van Cleve's division on 31 December 1862. The division, with a total strength of 3,836 men, was

chosen to conduct a river crossing then spearhead the army's attack against the Confederate right flank. General Rosecrans spent the hours before the attack with the 35th Indiana and Father Cooney, and even participated in the Father's Mass.⁵ General Van Cleve's men received the order at 0700 hours to begin crossing the river. The men from the 1st Brigade crossed the frigid waist-deep water of the river, all the while hearing the sounds of combat drifting across the battlefield. At approximately 1000, the 1st Brigade was across the river and in the process of consolidating its positions and the 2nd Brigade was just beginning to cross when General Van Cleve received new orders canceling the attack and further directing the division to recross the river at once. The 1st Brigade was urgently needed to help plug a gap and assist General Rousseau on the right wing of the army. The 2nd Brigade was needed to fend off Wheeler's cavalry which was attacking the army's rear area in an attempt to capture the Federal trains. Colonel Price, now commanding the 3rd Brigade, received his orders personally from General Rosecrans.⁶ Colonel Price and his men were needed to guard and hold McFadden's Ford and defend against any Confederate attempt to cross the river and turn the Federal left flank.

Sam Beatty and his brigade traversed the rear of the battlefield from the left to the right at the double quick. The brigade crossed the Nashville-Chattanooga Railroad and then the Murfreesboro-Nashville Turnpike. Here Beatty's men saw the results of the disaster caused by the attack of Bragg's Army of Tennessee against the unsuspecting Federal right wing. The frightened men of General Rousseau's division as well as horses, caissons, and wagons of every description

passed through Beatty's ranks. Rosecrans arrived in time to personally deploy the 1st Brigade while General Van Cleve looked on.⁷ Beatty's men deployed into the standard formation of two regiments up and two regiments behind in support of the front line. The front line was composed of the 19th Ohio and the 9th Kentucky, while the second line was composed of the 79th Indiana and the 11th Kentucky. Beatty's brigade held its ground even though great numbers of men and equipment continued to pour through and around the flanks of the brigade. The 14th and 15th Texas Regiments of Confederate General Matthew D. Ector's brigade were in pursuit of the retreating men of General Rousseau's division. The Southerners did not see Beatty's men come up until it was too late as the 1st Brigade was concealed somewhat by a dip in the ground. Just as the last stragglers cleared Beatty's front, his two lead regiments took aim and fired their first volley, checking the Confederate advance. The Confederates stubbornly held their ground and returned the fire, causing the 1st Brigade to receive its first casualties. After approximately 20 minutes, the two front regiments had incurred severe casualties and were beginning to run low on ammunition.⁸ Beatty ordered the 79th Indiana and the 11th Kentucky to the front. After the passage of lines with the 19th Ohio and the 9th Kentucky, the 79th Indiana and the 11th Kentucky delivered their first volley, causing the Confederates to fall back. General Rousseau maintained a commanding position behind the 19th Ohio and urged the men of the brigade forward.⁹ Taking the initiative, General Beatty ordered his men to fix bayonets. The entire brigade advanced steadily and pushed the Confederates back nearly a mile until the Confederates reached the cover of their

breastworks.¹⁰ General Beatty was an aggressive commander but certainly not foolhardy. Without substantial artillery support, he decided to halt the advance of his brigade.

Rosecrans ordered General Van Cleve to continue to press the enemy hard because General Rousseau was driving the Confederates on General Van Cleve's left. In the meantime, the 3rd Division's 2nd Brigade under Colonel James P. Fyffe had secured the trains in the rear of the army with assistance from a force of Federal Cavalry. With the rear secured, General Van Cleve ordered the 2nd Brigade forward to join in the advance of 1st Brigade. While Fyffe was moving forward, Colonel Harker's brigade from General Woods' 1st Division was ordered to fall in on Fyffe's right, securing the division's right flank.¹¹ As Fyffe moved forward, General Patrick Cleburne and his Confederate division formed to attack the force now consolidating around General Beatty. Colonel Harker, fearing for the safety of his own brigade, did not close up on Colonel Fyffe, but rather moved to a hill to the rear of Fyffe's brigade. General Van Cleve's two brigades had now advanced too far beyond other friendly troops and occupied an exposed position.¹² This created a gap in the Federal line at a most inopportune time. Colonel Harker had better observation of the battlefield from the relative safety and higher elevation of his position. Colonel Harker observed Confederate artillery repositioning and sent a messenger to General Van Cleve warning him of Confederate troops preparing to attack his exposed position.

General Van Cleve immediately realized the seriousness of the situation and sent messengers in four different directions with instructions and information. The first message was sent to Colonel Harker and

urged him to press the enemy hard in order to secure Fyffe's right flank because the division had no reserve to commit to the fight. The second message went to Captain Swallow, Commander of the 7th Indiana Battery, imploring the battery commander not to allow his guns to be captured. The third message went to General Beatty requesting him to send two regiments, if possible, to support Fyffe. The fourth message went to the Corps Commander General Crittenden to update him on the situation.¹³

The front of the 2nd Brigade, composed of the 59th Ohio and the 44th Indiana, was already actively engaged by Cleburne's regiments as the messages went out. The Confederate advance began to turn the exposed right flank of the 2nd Brigade. Seeing this, Fyffe ordered the 86th Indiana to wheel to the right in an attempt to refuse its flank but the Confederates were already moving faster than the order. The 2nd Brigade incurred tremendous casualties as the Confederates fired into the flanks of the brigade. The 86th Indiana took the brunt of the flanking movement. Both color bearers from the 86th were killed, causing the colors to fall into the hands of a sergeant from Wood's brigade of Cleburne's division.¹⁴ The same Confederate brigade captured 99 men of the 86th Indiana during the attack.¹⁵

The situation within the brigade was deteriorating rapidly. The commander of the 13th Ohio, Colonel Hawkins, was killed while attempting to lead his regiment through all the confusion.¹⁶ Attacking on the exposed seam, the Confederate attack caused each regiment in the division to give way and collapse in rapid succession. Colonel Fyffe wisely ordered the 7th Indiana Battery to fire in support of the 86th Indiana which created a window of opportunity and allowed his troops to

disengage from a losing contest. The entire brigade then fell back to escape the murderous enfilading fire on its right. Sensing the vulnerability of his unit to this attack and noting the mounting casualties, General Van Cleve ordered Beatty to fall back about 300 yards and to stay on line with 2nd Brigade.¹⁷ General Van Cleve also ordered the 44th Indiana to move to support the 7th Indiana Battery.

Throughout this action, the ever-present and excitable General Rosecrans personally gave orders to the regimental and brigade commanders of the division, completely circumventing the command authority of General Van Cleve. Rosecrans ordered the commander of the 9th Kentucky to conduct a bayonet charge into the teeth of the Confederate attack in an attempt to halt the Confederate drive. Rosecrans then thought better of the ridiculous order, rescinded it, and told the men of the regiment to lie down so the supporting artillery could go into action.¹⁸ General Rosecrans also ordered two of Beatty's regiments, the 9th and 11th Kentucky Regiments to support two batteries of artillery behind their position on the Murfreesboro Road. This order effectively canceled General Van Cleve's attempt to support Colonel Fyffe in his precarious situation.

The 2nd Brigade, now minus the 44th Indiana, the 19th Ohio, and 1st Brigade's 79th Indiana, withdrew to a cedar thicket, a position personally designated by Rosecrans.¹⁹ Rosecrans left the small force with orders to hold the ground at all hazards. The men held the position and eventually conducted a successful bayonet charge, throwing back the men from Cleburne's division. Cleburne's men, largely spent

from a hard days' fighting and with evening beginning to fall, did not conduct any further attacks against General Van Cleve's position.

At some point during the day, General Van Cleve was wounded seriously in the foot by an exploding artillery shell. General Van Cleve remained on the field during the fighting and turned over command of the division to General Beatty only after the fight ended for the day.²⁰ That night, General Van Cleve made his way back to Nashville in an ambulance.

On the first day of fighting at Stones River, General Van Cleve's division made a significant contribution to the overall effort by the Army of the Cumberland to stave off disaster. The two 3rd Division brigades involved in the fight against General Cleburne's division showed tremendous gallantry and stabilized the situation in the face of an overwhelming force. Also, true to their mission, Colonel Price and his green brigade guarded the ford by repelling several Confederate attempts to reconnoiter this crucial Federal position. Colonel Price and his men had a ringside seat at the ford and watched the entire fight from a safe distance. Unknowingly, the brigade had kept a whole Confederate division in check as the Confederate division commander, General Breckinridge, thought the troops holding the ford were there in at least division strength.

The next day, acting Division Commander General Beatty ordered the division back across the river in order to establish defensive positions on the east side. A fierce battle was expected and everyone believed General Bragg would continue his attempt to gain the Nashville Turnpike and crush the Federal Army. However, the day passed unevent-

fully with only several skirmishes, sporadic artillery fire, and the repositioning of the division. At one point, a large force of Confederate infantry was observed moving forward. In response to the potential threat, General Beatty was given an additional brigade commanded by Colonel Grose. All actions on this day were an attempt by Bragg to gain intelligence on the Federal dispositions. Bragg believed his army was victorious and had expected the Federals to leave the field during the previous night. He was surprised to find that the Army of the Cumberland was still on the field and full of fight.

The morning hours of 2 January were as quiet as the day prior; each army was waiting for the other to make the first move. By noon-time, Colonel Grider, the acting 1st Brigade Commander, thought that so much daylight had passed that the long awaited attack might not come until the next day. Yet in the afternoon, Bragg made a heavy reconnaissance in force supported by artillery towards the McFadden's Ford area.

Rosecrans, now growing concerned, repositioned an additional division and a brigade to support the 21st Corps holding the area. General Beatty with his three brigades plus Colonel Grose's brigade was still responsible to guard the ford itself.²¹ Beatty had his three brigades positioned on the east side of the river just to the southeast of the high ground. The 3rd Brigade, which had taken minimal casualties thus far in the battle, was positioned with three regiments, the 51st Ohio, 8th Kentucky, and the 35th Indiana, in the front rank, oriented to the southeast. The remaining two regiments of the 3rd Brigade, the 21st Kentucky, and the 99th Ohio, were positioned directly behind the first

three regiments in support. The 1st Brigade positioned three of its regiments, the 19th Ohio, 9th Kentucky, and the 11th Kentucky, behind the second rank of regiments from the 3rd Brigade. The 79th Indiana was positioned to plug a gap between the 3rd and 2nd Brigades. The 2nd Brigade was positioned to the left of the 79th Indiana and oriented to the south/southeast with two regiments in the front rank, the 44th Indiana and the 13th Ohio, and two regiments in support, the 59th Ohio and the 86th Indiana.

The positioning of the 3rd Division ultimately became a cause for concern for Bragg. He believed the security of his right flank was threatened by these troops. At about 1400 on 2 January, Bragg ordered General Breckinridge and his division to clear the high ground to its front. At about 1500, additional Confederate artillery batteries were positioned forward to support the impending attack, and Confederate skirmishers began tearing down a rail fence separating the two armies.

At approximately 1600, Breckinridge's fresh division began to march against Beatty's weary troops. At the same time, a fierce artillery bombardment began; from his vantage point, Colonel Fyffe could count 16 Confederate regimental colors moving directly towards the 3rd Brigade.²² The men from the green 3rd Brigade were about to undergo a transformation. They were about to live every soldier's nightmare as their position lay directly in the path of the Confederate axis of advance. Colonel Price had his men fix bayonets and lie down to conceal their exact position from the Confederates. The Confederates of Hanson's and Pillow's brigades were allowed to advance to within 60 yards when the Federal regimental commanders individually ordered their

regiments up to fire a deadly first volley at close range. The first volleys did not check the Confederate advance and the determined soldiers continued to march forward.

After ten to twelve minutes, Colonel Price ordered his brigade to fall back because the Confederates were beginning to turn his right flank. The commander of the 35th Indiana requested support from the 99th Ohio to his rear but found to his horror that the 99th Ohio had already fled its position for the safety of the opposite bank.²³ In response, the regiments from the 1st Brigade were ordered forward with fixed bayonets by General Beatty in an attempt to shore up the 3rd Brigade.

Unfortunately for the men of the 3rd Division, the Confederates had already gained the initiative and pressed home their advantage. Their initial success caused the Federals to lose all sense of organization, and men from the 3rd Brigade began a wild retreat for the rear, eventually taking with them the 79th Indiana and the remainder of the 1st Brigade. Leaders from both brigades gallantly attempted to form a second line of defense at the river bank but to no avail. The Confederate juggernaut drove the unorganized mob across the river. Colonel Fyffe's brigade was fortunate in that its position lay just to the right flank of the Confederate axis of advance. While holding their ground, Fyffe's men were able to fire directly into the flanks of the Confederates and inflict severe casualties. Regardless, after the 3rd Brigade rout, Fyffe's position became untenable and he reluctantly had his men retire from their position. To make matters worse, an artillery shell exploded near Fyffe, knocking him from his horse. The frightened

horse dragged the brigade commander, resulting in an injury which eventually forced him to relinquish his command of 2nd Brigade.²⁴ Upon seeing their commander knocked down, the men of the 2nd Brigade also began to fall apart.

While the apparent destruction of the Federal left was taking place, the 21st Corps Chief of Artillery Captain John Mendenhall began organizing a final line of defense with all available artillery. Mendenhall was able to consolidate approximately 57 pieces of artillery on the high ground overlooking the river. This amazing feat was accomplished just in time for the men of Breckinridge's division, who, sensing victory, charged up the hillside. Mendenhall let loose with every cannon he had, stopping the Confederate advance in its tracks. As the artillery fire continued, Confederates began their retreat back down the hill and across the river. The men of the 21st Corps, without orders, initiated their own attack against the retreating Confederates and turned the Confederate retreat into a rout. The remnants of Beatty's torn ranks joined in what became a melee to capture anything the Confederates left on the field. The 11th Kentucky captured a Confederate battle flag, and the 19th Ohio and the 9th Kentucky joined the 11th Kentucky in capturing four guns from the Washington Artillery.²⁵

There are several observations to be made of General Van Cleve, his division, and their performance at the Battle of Stones River. General Van Cleve initially appears to have maintained his composure in the initial stages of a plan gone awry, when tactical intelligence and common sense are essential. First, after his brigades were piecemealed into action, he was understandably concerned over the alignment and

threat to his 2nd Brigade's right flank, and he attempted to correct the weakness. He tried to rectify the alignment of a brigade which unfortunately belonged to another division. He was mindful of the proper positioning of the artillery and its ability to support his brigades. Also, he worked to keep his corps commander informed of his situation. After sensing the disaster which was about to strike the 2nd Brigade, General Van Cleve attempted to reposition regiments to meet the Confederate attack. General Van Cleve appears to have performed and functioned as a division commander must, in order to set the conditions for the success of his brigades in combat.

Also apparent is General Van Cleve's assessment of the combat capabilities of his commanders and their brigades, as reflected in the missions assigned and to whom he turned in moments of crisis. Probably due to General Van Cleve's long familiarity with General Beatty and Beatty's combat veteran regiments, the 1st Brigade appears to have become the division "fire brigade," the brigade of choice when entering a vague situation. His former brigade command, the 2nd Brigade, seems to be second choice for difficult missions. The 3rd Brigade, holding the majority of relatively inexperienced regiments and commanders, especially when compared to the other units in the division, seems to have been left behind. This appears to be the "order of march" for the division in combat at Stones River, and it would hold true at Chickamauga, nine months later.

It is not clear at what point in the battle on the thirty-first of December General Van Cleve was wounded. His commanders subsequently referred to taking orders from another division commander, General

Rousseau, and from General Rosecrans himself. Whether this was because General Van Cleve was off the field having his wound attended to or because he was not aggressively exercising his own authority is unknown. Based on his earlier actions, it appears unlikely that General Van Cleve was shirking any of his command responsibilities. Earlier in the fighting on 31 December, he positioned himself where he could best observe the actions of both his brigades. Yet it is interesting to note that both brigade and regimental commanders refer to the direct guidance from Generals Rosecrans and Rousseau in their after action reports, while correspondingly there seems to be a distinct lack of guidance from General Van Cleve after his initial flurry of activity.

At the opening stages of Chickamauga, General Van Cleve had been in command of the division for a total of nine months, minus a three-month leave of absence taken to allow his wound to heal more fully. He was on leave from 9 January 1863 until his return to the division on 13 March. In the nine months of division command, he led all three brigades in battle during only one operation, an unopposed river crossing. General Van Cleve experienced only one day in battle as a division commander before Chickamauga.

Ironically, the situations the division encountered at Stones River were similar to the situations they would face at Chickamauga. Had the after-action review (AAR) process employed by today's army been utilized in 1863, things might have turned out better for General Van Cleve and his division at Chickamauga. The division could have developed more effective tactics, techniques, and procedures from the situations encountered and the lessons learned at Stones River:

entering a vague situation in dense timber without flank security, withstanding masses of demoralized men and equipment moving through a unit's ranks, establishing liaison with adjacent units, positioning artillery to support infantry as a second line of defense, and creating control measures to ensure proper alignment in combat. Lastly, issues from the general officer perspective include: where does the commander need to position himself to best command and control his brigades, what formations have specific advantages or disadvantages over others, and how does a commander limit the undue influence of other general officers attempting to control his troops.

The division proved its ability to endure adversity at Stones River. Unfortunately, the experience gained by the brigade and regimental commanders at Stones River seems to have been lost to the division before the Battle of Chickamauga. Many of the senior division leaders at Stones River were absent at Chickamauga, either through death, injury, other taskings, or back home recruiting. The commanders who should have employed the Stones River lessons on the field at Chickamauga had not commanded at Stones River. The turnover of commanders in the nine months between Stones River and Chickamauga caused a significant degradation in experienced leadership at Chickamauga. The 2nd and 3rd Brigade commanders were new to their commands; fully eight of the twelve regimental commanders at Chickamauga did not command their regiment at Stones River.

On 5 January 1863, General Rosecrans and the Army of the Cumberland moved in and occupied the town of Murfreesboro. He remained there for the next six months, taking the time to rebuild his supplies

and his army. The writers of the 86th Indiana history described Murfreesboro as decidedly and emphatically a camp of instruction.²⁶ The months from January to June were filled with burial details, caring for the wounded, promotions, officer competency tests, filling vacant positions in the ranks, foraging, and constant guard against attacks by the ever-present Confederate cavalry. On 18 March, the entire 21st Corps was reviewed by Rosecrans as the army began to regain its fighting capability. By mid-March, general orders called for an in-ranks roll call five times a day accompanied with drill. A typical day began with reveille at 0500, stand-to, breakfast, and the daily guard mount at 0800. The day continued with company drill from 0900-1100, regiment/brigade drill 1400-1600, dress parade at 1700, and tattoo at 2000. Sunday mornings were reserved for in-ranks inspections.²⁷ General Van Cleve's men passed the time at Murfreesboro religiously following the training schedule much to the immense displeasure of the soldiers. Their six-month build-up was occasionally punctuated with minor skirmishing. The experience of the 3rd Brigade was illustrative, as it was involved in minor skirmishing while conducting a reconnaissance on 3 April outside of Auburn, Tennessee.

On 13 March 1863, Van Cleve returned to the division after fully recovering from his wound. The men of the division put on their best dress uniforms and conducted a pass-in-review for Van Cleve. That same day, Colonel Barnes officially took command of the 3rd Brigade, while Colonel Matthews, who was injured at Dobbins' Ford, left the army to become the Mayor of Cincinnati, Ohio. General Beatty asked for and

received a 20-day leave of absence, volunteering his time to search for and arrest deserters from the army.²⁸

General Rosecrans, under intense pressure from Washington to advance and satisfied that his army was prepared to begin its campaign for middle Tennessee, moved out of Murfreesboro on 23 June 1863. This opening movement, which would eventually culminate in the Battle of Chickamauga, was known as the Tullahoma Campaign. While the rest of the army advanced, General Van Cleve's division was selected to remain at Murfreesboro to garrison the town. Some in the division felt that they were left behind because their commander was too old for the campaign ahead.²⁹ Quite possibly, the division was left behind because the corps and army commander wanted to give Van Cleve some additional time to recover from his wound and rebuild his division. Given the fairly impressive performance of the division at Stones River, it is unlikely that the division was singled out to remain in garrison because it was inept and unable to perform the missions which would be required.

Rosecrans marched his army east, outmaneuvering Bragg every step of the way. By 4 July, most of the army's major movements were complete, and General Van Cleve's division was ordered forward. His 3rd Brigade had already begun its march toward McMinnville on 30 June, led by Colonel Barnes. General Beatty's brigade left Murfreesboro on 4 July to garrison Manchester. Consequently, General Van Cleve marched to McMinnville with only the two regiments available to him from the 2nd Brigade. He arrived there on 7 July and consolidated the two 2nd Brigade regiments with his 3rd Brigade. The men bivouacked east of the town for the next month. Their mission at McMinnville was to guard the

army's left flank. On 10 July, there was general rejoicing throughout the division as the news of Vicksburg's surrender reached McMinnville. Also on the 10th, Beatty's brigade, now released from duty at Manchester, arrived in McMinnville. Rosecrans then halted the army to bring up supplies from Murfreesboro and to await the best possible road conditions before moving on to Chattanooga.

On 15 August, the division, minus the 2nd Brigade, began a long series of road marches. The 2nd Brigade was tasked to remain behind and continue to occupy McMinnville. The long marches took the men across the Cumberland Mountains, through the Sequatchie Valley, and across the Tennessee River arriving at Shellsburg, Tennessee, on 4 September. It was not uncommon for wives to ride south to visit their husbands in the army. Just prior to the river crossing on the 28th of August, Mrs. Stout came on horseback for a prolonged visit with her husband who commanded the 17th Kentucky. Making note of the long visit in his diary, Major Claggett remarked that if she had been his wife he would have sent her home. Mrs. Stout remained with the regiment as late as 11 September.³⁰ The men of the division were in high spirits after the successful river crossing. They were allowed some time out to enjoy the scenery of the area and the natural curiosities such as the Nickajack Cave. On 6 September as the division passed through Whiteside, Tennessee, Colonel Price and the 21st Kentucky were instructed to remain behind in the town of Whiteside as part of the army reserve.³¹

Nearing Chattanooga and fearing a battle for that town, General Van Cleve issued his men an extra 20 rounds of ammunition to carry in addition to the 40 rounds already in their ammunition pouches.

Confederate deserters told General Van Cleve's men that the town was left undefended and that Bragg had pulled his army out in a movement towards Rome, Georgia. General Crittenden received the same information, and on 9 September General Wood's division marched into the town and captured it without firing a shot. General Van Cleve and his men woke up to the sound of reveille at 0200 on the 9th, and with a clear sky and moonlight, marched east from Chattanooga. By sunrise the men faced Lookout Mountain. After moving to the base of the mountain, the 1st Brigade began a foot race among the four regiments to be the first to plant their regimental flag on the summit of the mountain. The race was exciting but nevertheless good humored competition among the men as the regimental colors were all planted at approximately the same time.

General Van Cleve's division ended the day bivouacking eight to ten miles south of Chattanooga near the town of Rossville, Georgia. A private in the 1st Brigade wrote,

There was no poetry in our jaded minds, the soldiers were stifled with the dust of the plain; tormented with thirst; hungry, tired, footsore, and exhausted.³²

The General took a brief respite to visit his old regiment, the 2nd Minnesota and reminisce about old times before moving on. The next morning, 10 September, General Van Cleve marched with the division to Ringgold, Georgia.

On the 11th, Colonel Dick and the 2nd Brigade, released from duty at McMinnville, reported to General Van Cleve at 0700 and joined the division while enroute to Ringgold. As the division entered the town the men witnessed confusion and dismay among the inhabitants.

Everyone was busy moving his personal belongings and trying to leave the area before the arrival of the Federals. The troops seized several train cars, as well as the mail from the Army of Tennessee. Colonel Barnes' brigade led the advance of the division into the town and easily brushed aside the slight Confederate cavalry resistance. Colonel Wilder's mounted infantry moved ahead of General Van Cleve in an attempt to cut off the Confederate route of retreat. Unable to do so, General Van Cleve ended his advance for the day three or four miles outside of Ringgold near the town of Tunnel Hill.³³

As General Van Cleve moved against Ringgold, Rosecrans grew concerned over the wide dispersion of his army in the face of growing evidence of a sizable Confederate threat in the area. Realizing his error, Rosecrans ordered the army to concentrate in the vicinity of Chickamauga Creek. On 12 September in response to orders, General Van Cleve marched his division back towards the Chattanooga-LaFayette Road and arrived at Lee and Gordon's Mill taking up a position there with the rest of the 21st Corps. Intelligence from various sources in the area--deserters, pro-Union informants, and small skirmishes--indicated that the Confederate army was probably concentrated in the vicinity of LaFayette, Georgia, which was located approximately 13 miles due south of Lee and Gordon's Mill. General Crittenden had his own theory on the plight of the Confederate Army. He believed the Confederates had continued their retreat south and would probably make a stand in defense of the vital industrial center at Rome, Georgia.³⁴ To satisfy himself as to the accuracy of his theory, General Crittenden ordered several reconnaissance missions. He ordered Van Cleve to conduct a

reconnaissance in force a few miles towards LaFayette the following day, 13 September. General Van Cleve deployed his entire division along with artillery support for the mission, without any additional guidance from his commander, although General Crittenden had previously made mention of the potential threat in the area. General Van Cleve's men crossed Chickamauga Creek in the morning at approximately 0900 and marched towards LaFayette with the 1st Brigade in the lead, followed by the 2nd Brigade, while the 3rd Brigade brought up the rear. General Van Cleve positioned himself and the division staff directly behind the rear of 1st Brigade riding alongside General Beatty and his staff. The force encountered Confederate cavalry pickets almost immediately after crossing the creek.³⁵ After driving the Confederates for approximately two and a half miles, General Van Cleve halted the men at midday and allowed them time to eat and rest. Continuing the mission after this break, General Van Cleve's force marched another one-half mile and ran into two Confederate cannons with infantry support. The Confederate threat was effectively suppressed and driven off after a short skirmish with assistance from the 3rd Wisconsin Battery. At 1530, without pushing any further, General Van Cleve led his men back to their encampment, satisfied he had accomplished his mission.

The mission ended with the loss of four men, one of whom was his chief of artillery Captain Drury, who was seriously wounded. General Van Cleve was extremely fortunate; he left the field blissfully ignorant of a massive Confederate force--Confederate General Polk's corps--which lay just several miles beyond his farthest advance. The mission did not result in an intelligence coup in that it did not con-

firm the presence of a large force of Confederates; however, General Rosecrans' headquarters had already correctly deduced that a large force of Confederates was in fact located at LaFayette. The lack of substantial contact with the Confederates more than likely confused the issue as General Crittenden reported his front clear of Confederate troops. A more aggressive division commander might have pushed his troops farther and uncovered the Confederate positions, but gained the information at the potential loss of his division. General Van Cleve was not the only commander to report only light resistance. Other units were dispatched on the same type of mission, and all returned with negative reports of contact. Also, the reconnaissance might have brought on a general engagement with the Confederates at a time when the Army of the Cumberland could least afford a fight due to the wide dispersion of the units.

In an attempt to eliminate the possibility of a premature engagement, General Crittenden received additional instructions from General Rosecrans' headquarters at 1220 that afternoon. The orders were to consolidate the 21st Corps in defensible positions along Missionary Ridge. General Crittenden received this message after General Van Cleve had already left on the reconnaissance mission.

General Van Cleve wrote to his wife the following day that his division spent the day "conducting a reconnaissance or march or both." He seems to have been oblivious to the danger and unsure of the intent of his reconnaissance. Possibly the weariness of the campaign was already affecting his judgment. In the same letter he began to complain of the long marches, lack of sleep, and poor food. Ironically, he noted

in this letter that "the division has been beating about here for seven days looking for the enemy, but as yet do not find them in heavy force."³⁶

To paraphrase General Van Cleve, the division continued to march about or conduct a reconnaissance for the next several days, finally coming to rest at Crawfish Springs where it joined the rest of the 21st Corps on the evening of the 15th. The next several days were spent at Crawfish Springs with small firefights flaring up between the two armies. The men of the division readied itself, for they knew they were facing the Confederate Army, and the prospects for a large-scale battle looked very good. Any doubts of an impending battle were quelled by the intelligence gained from a small patrol from the 3rd Brigade. On the night of the 16th, this patrol crossed the creek and moved to within earshot of the Confederate pickets. The patrol overheard the Confederates debating the probability of Bragg's and Longstreet's combined forces being able to annihilate the Union Army once they cut the Federal lines of communications to Chattanooga.³⁷ General Crittenden ordered General Van Cleve and his division back to Lee and Gordon's Mill on the 18th. The sounds of heavy cannonfire were constant throughout the day as the division marched back to the mill. The division formed a line of battle in a field overlooking the creek and hastily set up breastworks. Pickets were posted within sight of Confederate artillery batteries with instructions to fall back if attacked. The Confederates in front of the division spent the day probing Van Cleve's line; the actions resulted in several small firefights. Horses and artillery remained harnessed and extra

ammunition was distributed to the men who were prepared to meet any emergency. Van Cleve's soldiers went to sleep that night on their gum blankets and their weapons. The night was cold; no fires were allowed. In the distance, the sounds of trains moving behind the Confederate lines were heard throughout the night as were the sounds of General Thomas' 14th Corps moving north to position itself on the left wing of the army.³⁸

While most of the men of the division tried to get some sleep the night before the battle, some of them were already participating in the opening shots of the battle that evening. Earlier on that day, Colonel Dick was ordered to send two of his regiments, the 13th Ohio and the 59th Ohio, to support General Wood who was engaged in a skirmish with the Confederates.³⁹ The two regiments gained a commander for their small force and additional support from the 99th Ohio. Colonel Swaine, commander of the 99th and the only senior regular army officer, now commanded all three regiments.⁴⁰

Later in the afternoon Colonel Wilder, who had already been pushed back from Alexander's Bridge, requested support for his mounted infantry from General Van Cleve. In response, General Van Cleve sent Colonel Dick with his remaining two regiments from the 2nd Brigade to the aid of Colonel Wilder. Enroute to Wilder, Colonel Dick replaced the veteran 59th Ohio with the 86th Indiana, taking the 59th Ohio for the more hazardous mission.⁴¹ For an unknown reason, Colonel Dick continually tried to safeguard the 86th Indiana, always giving the dangerous duties to other regiments of the brigade; quite possibly Major Jacob C. Dick was related to the brigade commander. Upon reaching Wilder's posi-

tion, Colonel Dick posted his two regiments straddling the Alexander's Bridge Road. About an hour after dark, Confederate cavalry skirmishers began probing Colonel Dick's line. In response to the threat, Colonel Wilder sent a detachment from his mounted infantry as skirmishers for the 59th Ohio.⁴² The detachment successfully repelled the Confederate skirmishers. About a half an hour later, the Confederates reappeared in force with infantry from Brigadier General John Gregg's brigade of Bushrod Johnson's division. The Confederates drove in the skirmishers and the 59th Ohio lay down and waited for the approach of the Confederates. When the enemy moved to within 50 yards, the 59th rose up and fired a volley which successfully checked their advance. Afterwards, the 59th Ohio conducted an orderly withdrawal to a better defensive position 150 yards to the rear.⁴³ After the initial probe of the Federal line by the Confederates, Colonel Dick's men were left undisturbed for the remainder of the night. At 0400 on the 19th, Colonel Wilder ordered Dick's two regiments to fall further back to a less exposed position. Colonel Dick complied with the orders and remained there until approximately 1300.⁴⁴

Endnotes

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- ⁴Captain T. J. Wright, History of the Eighth Regiment Kentucky Volunteer Infantry (St. Joseph, MO: St. Joseph Steam Printing Co., 1880), 123.
- ⁵Father Peter Paul Cooney, Chaplain 35th Indiana Regiment, Letters, 153.
- ⁶The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies Series I, Vol. 20, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1890), 574.
- ⁷Ibid., 584.
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- ⁹Ibid., 594.
- ¹⁰Ibid., 584.
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- ¹⁴The Eighty-Sixth Regiment Indiana Volunteer Infantry (Crawfordsville, IN: The Journal Co., 1895), 103.
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- ¹⁷Ibid., 584.
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- ²³Ibid., 611.
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- ²⁶Barnes, Carnahan, and McCain, 127.
- ²⁷Wright, 151.
- ²⁸Samuel Beatty, Papers, National Archives.
- ²⁹Ibid., 162.
- ³⁰Major David M. Claggett, 17 Kentucky Infantry, Diary.
- ³¹Captain Thomas Speed, The Union Regiments of Kentucky (Louisville, KY: Courier-Journal Printing Co., 1897), 491.
- ³²J. A. Reep, "Four Years at the Front as a Private."
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- ³⁵Ibid., 802.
- ³⁶General Horation P. Van Cleve, Papers. Minnesota Historical Society, (United States Military Academy, West Point, New York).
- ³⁷Wright, 185.
- ³⁸History of the Seventy-Ninth Regiment Indiana Volunteer Infantry, (Indianapolis, IN: The Hollenbeck Press, 1899), 89.
- ³⁹The War of the Rebellion, Series I, Vol. 30, 803.
- ⁴⁰Ibid., 848.
- ⁴¹Ibid., 822.
- ⁴²Ibid., 832.
- ⁴³Ibid.
- ⁴⁴Ibid., 823.

CHAPTER 5
BROTHERTON FIELD: 19 SEPTEMBER 1863

officers and soldiers, I have the greatest confidence in you all. . . . stand together firm. . . unless we are deceived, we will have hot work and we will have it in a short time. Much is expected from this division and this brigade.

Colonel Sidney M. Barnes
Commander, 3rd Brigade
19 September 1863

General Bragg, while awaiting the arrival of General James Longstreet's corps, issued orders on the night of 16 September to attack the Federal army's left flank and interpose his army between General Rosecrans and the Federal supply base at Chattanooga, which would cut the Federal lines of communications. Unable to wait any longer for Longstreet, Bragg ordered the attack to commence on the morning of the 19 September. The Army of Tennessee initiated its attack in earnest and by mid-morning the Army of the Cumberland was hard pressed on its left. Even though the men of the division could hear the sounds of combat, the heavy booming of the cannons, the rattle of musketry, and eerily, the loud cheers from men of both armies which normally accompanied a charge, the situation remained stable and quiet on General Van Cleve's front at Lee and Gordon's Mill. The men knew it was merely a question of time before they themselves would be thrust into the fire. Second Lieutenant Hurd of the 19th Ohio remembered:

During the forenoon, artillery was constantly thundering and bel-
lowing in a hundred different positions at a distance, while the
neared rattle of small arms told us all that a heavy battle was in
progress. Both men and officers exhibited a good deal of anxiety,
which at times bordered almost upon nervousness, as we lay there
listening to those deep reverberations.¹

By mid-morning, the only action involving the men of the
division was a short artillery duel with a hidden Confederate battery
and a small firefight with Confederate skirmishers who probed General
Van Cleve's position. The men positioned safely behind the cover
provided by a rail barricade easily repelled the skirmishers. Midday
came and went without a call for their support.²

The 21st Corps Commander General T. L. Crittenden had been busy
all morning long. Early in the morning, he conducted a personal recon-
naissance along the LaFayette Road to assess the situation to his front.
All was quiet when he visited Colonel Wilder's and Colonel Dick's posi-
tions. Later at approximately 1100, the corps commander listened to the
same sounds of combat Van Cleve's men heard. His initial reaction
caused him to bring up his 2nd Division commanded by General John M.
Palmer with orders to support General George H. Thomas' corps on the
left.³ Rosecrans approved of the move while General Palmer gathered his
men and moved to the left. Marching north, General Palmer received some
timely guidance from General Rosecrans, who suggested that it would be
better to stagger his brigades and move en echelon. This afforded the
added benefit of refusing the division's flank as Palmer moved through
the dense timber.⁴

As soon as General Palmer's division was sent in, the sounds of
heavy combat drifted back to General Crittenden and his staff. At 1120,
General Crittenden received a message from General Thomas' aide-de-camp

Captain Willard. The note requested the support of another division if one was available. General Crittenden then sent his Chief of Artillery Major Mendenhall with Colonel McKibbin of General Rosecrans' staff in search of General Palmer. The two staff officers were ordered to find Palmer and report back with an accurate situation update. The officers never even made it to General Palmer's sector. While enroute, they were fired upon by Confederate skirmishers causing them to turn back. Both officers returned and reported the incident and their failure to reach Palmer to General Crittenden. Taking the initiative, the corps commander made the decision to send another staff officer, Lieutenant Colonel Lodor, along with Colonel McKibbin to deliver a message to General Rosecrans' headquarters at the Widow Glenn's house. Crittenden feared that Palmer might be cut off and surrounded. His second message requested approval to call up General Van Cleve from Lee and Gordon's Mill to support Palmer's right flank. Instead of waiting for an answer, General Crittenden sent another staff officer to alert General Van Cleve and ordered the 3rd Division to move immediately north along the LaFayette Road.⁵

General Van Cleve received the message from Crittenden's staff officer at approximately 1300 and quickly began forming his infantry.⁶ He dispatched one of his own staff officers on the road to find Colonel Dick. Van Cleve released Colonel Dick from his mission with Wilder and ordered him to bring his two regiments and quickly consolidate with his two remaining regiments, who were formed behind General Beatty's 1st Brigade. Colonel Dick, the 44th Indiana, and the 59th Ohio fell in behind the division formation as the men moved at the double-quick up

the LaFayette Road. Before General Van Cleve left Lee and Gordon's Mill, he instructed Colonel Barnes and his 3rd Brigade to remain behind to defend the mill area. Specifically, General Van Cleve left Colonel Barnes with the following guidance: "Take care of yourself, hold your position, and repel any assault of the enemy."⁷ To accomplish the mission, Colonel Barnes concentrated his four regiments on the west side of the LaFayette Road, placing the 3rd Wisconsin Battery plus two guns from the 26th Pennsylvania in the center with two regiments on either side of the battery. After posting skirmishers to his front, Colonel Barnes settled down and remained in this position for less than an hour before he was ordered into the fight.⁸

Before moving to the left to aid Palmer, General Beatty ordered the men to fix bayonets.⁹ This was more than a purely symbolic order. The bayonet made it much more difficult for a soldier to load and fire his rifle. The brigade commander realized his unit was going into a tough fight after being told that friendly troops were "hard pressed" in the dense timber. His order set the tone for the expectations he had for the division in the fight: they were going in to give a good account of themselves.

The division had found itself going into battle under similar circumstances to those encountered at Stones River. Now as then, General Van Cleve and his men were ordered to traverse the battlefield and conduct a hasty attack in an attempt to stave off disaster. General Van Cleve ordered the men to move at the double-quick, but by then, the day had grown hot and the men were quickly becoming exhausted. General Beatty put them back to quick time. Second Lieutenant Hurd wrote:

Presently the order came. On the road the dust was ankle deep, the sky was clear and the sun overhead. We struck a double-quick; clouds of dust enveloped us and hid from view every surrounding object. General Beatty made the decision to change from double-quick to quick-time while enroute, to avoid exhausting and covering the men with dust before they went into action.¹⁰

Confederate General Bushrod Johnson's division was sitting idle just to the east of LaFayette Road and fortunately for the Federals did not make any attempt to move forward and seize the road. No one was in position to prevent a rupture in the Federal lines of communications except Van Cleve's unsuspecting troops. As General Van Cleve and his two brigades moved up the road, they came upon General Crittenden and his staff. During a short meeting, General Van Cleve apparently received his only guidance from the corps chief of staff rather than the corps commander. General Van Cleve specifically stated later at General Crittenden's court of inquiry that the Corps Chief of Staff Lieutenant Colonel Lyne Starling was the only officer who talked to him during the brief meeting. Lieutenant Colonel Starling gave General Van Cleve his mission and told the General the position he was to occupy in support of General Palmer.¹¹ At the time, General Crittenden may have been silent because he was distracted by concerns over 14th Corps' ability to repel the heavy Confederate attacks. He sensed that the heavy Confederate attacks against the Federal left threatened the security of the entire army. The corps commander was riding south to bring up the 1st Division, which was also his last uncommitted division. Wood's 1st Division was to move to the army's left and secure General Van Cleve's right flank. Unfortunately for General Van Cleve, he did not receive any further guidance from his corps commander or support from his fellow division commander for the remainder of the day. While General

Crittenden was rounding up the 1st Division, both the corps commander and the 1st Division became decisively engaged in the brewing fight which now involved the Federal right at the Viniard House.¹² The fight at the Viniard House soon engulfed Van Cleve's 3rd Brigade which had been left behind to defend Lee and Gordon's Mill.

Thirty minutes after receiving the order to move, General Van Cleve and his two brigades reached their designated step-off point. General Van Cleve hastily formed his two brigades along LaFayette Road just to the east of the Brotherton House. The 1st Brigade was posted in the lead and the 2nd Brigade fell in directly behind and in support of the 1st Brigade. Moving at the double-quick, Colonel Dick and his two regiments rejoined the rest of the 2nd Brigade. Both brigades formed the standard Federal brigade formation of the period: two regiments forward and two regiments in support. The 1st Brigade's front rank consisted of the 19th Ohio on the right and the 79th Indiana on the left.¹³ The brigade wheeled into line with the orders "on the right by file into line." It took only a moment to adjust the ranks, and this was completed rapidly and in splendid style.¹⁴ The second rank was composed of the 9th Kentucky on the left and the 17 Kentucky on the right. Colonel Dick organized his brigade with the 59th Ohio on the right and the 44th Indiana on the left, both regiments in the front rank. The 13th Ohio was posted in support of the 59th Ohio. The 86th Indiana was positioned in support of the 44th Indiana.¹⁵ While the men were forming, skirmishers from the 19th Ohio commanded by Lieutenant Thomas A. Brierly moved to their front through foliage described as a pine forest, thick with low bushes which restricted clear observation.¹⁶

It is interesting to note just how General Van Cleve reacted to his orders. The mission statement was short and simple: "Move to the support of Palmer." In modern terms, this order translates as an order to conduct a hasty attack. Van Cleve was restricted to taking only two brigades with him for the mission, as one brigade had been ordered to remain behind to defend the Lee and Gordon's Mill area. As was his tendency, General Van Cleve selected General Beatty and the 1st Brigade to lead the hasty attack. He also chose his 2nd Brigade to follow and support, even though the commander and two of the four regiments had spent the previous night awake and alert for Confederates. The last-minute juggling created extra effort for himself and his staff as he had to collect the regiments of 2nd Brigade, order them forward, and have them come together just prior to jumping off into the treeline. He could have easily taken the fresh 3rd Brigade and had the 2nd Brigade fall back to the defenses at Lee and Gordon's Mill. However, this would have meant taking a completely inexperienced commander and a brigade composed of troops who, generally speaking, had minimal combat experience.

The formation General Van Cleve selected is also instructive and it provides insight into General Van Cleve's tactical acumen. Without firing a shot, he effectively reduced his combat power by 75 percent. Only the first rank from the 1st Brigade was able to react to any situation. The front rank of the division, made up of the 19th Ohio and the 79th Indiana, was approximately 680 feet long. At a time when massed volleys can mean the difference between success or disaster, starting out with only 25 percent of its combat power forward on a

narrow front significantly reduced the overall effectiveness of the division. In order to react to any contingency, the 2nd Brigade would have to march from its place in formation behind the 1st Brigade to the right and then forward. This complicated movement in dense timber would be made much more difficult if it had to be accomplished under the additional stress of combat. The formation chosen by Van Cleve invited trouble and confusion from the start. Van Cleve's lack of experience in combat was probably the reason for his poor decision. As a division commander, he had never before entered battle with more than one brigade. Unfortunately, General Van Cleve did not receive the same helpful guidance for a more effective division formation that General Palmer had received before going into action in the heavily wooded terrain. General Rosecrans sent a message to Palmer explaining that a better method to move through the timber would be to move the brigades staggered and en echelon, which would safeguard the flanks of the brigades.

It took the men of Van Cleve's two brigades little time to get reorganized into their brigade formations. Once this was accomplished, they stepped off the LaFayette Road and into the treeline with a loud cheer. The time was approximately 1330.¹⁷ Heavy firing was heard just to their front and left as Grose's brigade of Palmer's division was engaged with Wright's brigade of Cheatham's division. The 3rd Division moved forward through the dense timber for approximately 200 yards. Taking less than five minutes to cover the distance, the front ranks began to engage the 38th Tennessee and other remnants of Wright's brigade who were falling back from the added weight of Van Cleve's

division.¹⁸ The Confederates withdrew through their own battery which had just pulled into position 15 minutes earlier. Lieutenant Mounts of the 79th Indiana pointed out the Confederate battery to Colonel Knefler, his regimental commander.¹⁹ The battery turned out to be Carnes' Tennessee Battery which had just begun firing on Grose's brigade. The battery was positioned to the 1st Brigade's left front, and without waiting for orders, the 79th Indiana and the 19th Ohio charged the battery in order to capture their first prize of the battle. Fortunately, they moved faster than the Confederates. The Confederate artillerymen had just observed the men of Beatty's brigade coming into their position from their left rear and began to reposition their guns to face the immediate threat posed by Beatty's attack.²⁰ The Confederate battery now had the attention of the entire 1st Brigade and received fire from all four regiments. Beatty's regiments immediately concentrated a heavy fire into the battery area. Colonel Knefler gave an order to disable the horses, since wounding or killing the horses would effectively disable the battery.²¹ With many of the horses dead, the guns could not be easily recovered by the Confederates, and as a result, Carnes' men fled to the rear without their guns. Captain Carnes, a former U. S. naval officer, barely escaped with his life. Just as he fell back through friendly lines, his horse collapsed dead with five bullet wounds.²² The four guns of the Confederate battery then became the center of attention as men gathered around the guns to inspect them. Artillery officers from the 26th Pennsylvania made a quick inspection and noted that the guns were loaded with double canister and the friction primers had already been adjusted. A quick

jerk of the lanyard was all that was required to send a deadly shower of lead into the ranks of Van Cleve's men.²³ The impetuous charge made by the front ranks saved many men from the disastrous effects of double canister.

A combined effort from men of all four regiments began the process of separating the dead horses from the caissons and limbers and moving the captured Confederate artillerymen and their guns to the rear. Eventually Colonel Stout of the 17th Kentucky claimed two guns as trophies.²⁴ The battery's flag was claimed to have been captured by Major Claggett of the 17th Kentucky, for which he received glowing praise in reports in his hometown newspaper. However, Captain Jennings from the same regiment remembered the story somewhat differently, writing that the trophy was actually captured by a private in D Company, while Major Claggett was stationed in the rear of the regiment.²⁵ The 19th Ohio claimed 20 prisoners and assisted in the removal of the guns.²⁶ The 79th Indiana claimed to have captured all four of the guns single-handedly, but moved them to the rear with some assistance.²⁷ Years later, members of each of the four Federal regiments argued with the Park Commission, each claiming that their regiment was solely responsible for the charge upon and capture of the Confederate battery. Many of the veterans were angered and stated that the plaques should reflect accurate history or they should be removed. A quick look at the regimental reports of the incident clearly proves that the capture was a combined effort from all four of the regiments.

While the initiative of these men saved many of the lives in the front rank, 1st Brigade's sudden charge to the left caused a ripple

effect in the two-brigade formation. The charge resulted in uncovering the second rank of the 1st Brigade as well as the entire 2nd Brigade. Colonel Dick then had to move his brigade forward and to the right to come alongside the 1st Brigade. All the while, men received sustained sporadic fire from the remnants of Wright's brigade. The fight for the battery took approximately 15 to 20 minutes, but processing the trophies of the fight to the rear took somewhat longer. Carnes' Battery had the unintended effect of acting as a magnet, and regiments from 1st Brigade were now oriented generally to the northeast with their right flank open to their front. There also existed a slight gap between the right flank of Grose's brigade and the left of Beatty's brigade. Unknown to General Van Cleve who had positioned himself to the rear and in between the two brigades, there was a much larger and more determined threat looming on the horizon. The friendly lines Captain Carnes found as his horse was dying were not those of his own brigade, but of a brigade from a fresh division just coming into the line.²⁸

At approximately 1400, Confederate General A. P. Stewart and his division moved through the dense timber to support Cheatham's division on their right.²⁹ The Army of Tennessee, heretofore noted for low morale, held up General Stewart's division as an excellent example of the effect strong leadership can have on men and their desire to accomplish any given mission. As a result of the division's strong performances and high motivation in combat, it earned a well-deserved nickname: the men were proud to be known as the "Little Giant" division. As the battle wore on through the day, both armies adopted the same basic practice--that of continually moving units to the north to support units

already engaged and to find or refuse an open flank. Just as General Van Cleve sought to fulfill this purpose, General Stewart inadvertently steered his men headlong into a fight with General Van Cleve, a move that was actually a result of vague guidance, last-minute intelligence, and on-the-spot decisions by the Confederate commander.

Brigadier General Henry D. Clayton, commanding a largely inexperienced brigade of Alabamians in Stewart's division, formed his brigade with all three regiments on line. Clayton's brigade brought 1,352 men to the fight along a 1,350-foot front.³⁰ The frontage of Van Cleve's division with both brigades almost on line was approximately 1200 feet and was therefore overlapped somewhat by Clayton's brigade-on-line. While moving through the timber, Clayton was warned of General Van Cleve's presence and re-oriented his brigade to move directly west towards the LaFayette Road.³¹ As Clayton moved his brigade forward, Van Cleve's division was still preoccupied with both the moving of the artillery pieces to the rear and the realignment of the 2nd Brigade. Men from each side identified their opponent at approximately the same moment. General Beatty noted that suddenly a heavy fire opened from his right flank causing his brigade to fall back a short distance. The front rank fell back through the second rank, leaving the 9th and 17th Kentucky facing the brunt of the fire.³² Clayton's brigade, due to its extended frontage, also engaged the unprepared 44th Indiana and the 59th Ohio. Both regiments reacted swiftly even though the men were already exhausted from their previous days' experience supporting Colonel Wilder. Captain A. J. Stevens, commanding the 26th Pennsylvania Battery, positioned his four guns on the same ground previously held by

Carnes' battery. His battery worked hard to get to this firing position as each gun had to be pulled through the woods by hand. Captain Stevens thought he had positioned the battery to the rear of the brigade, but the artillerymen found to their surprise that they were actually in the front rank as the two opposing divisions engaged each other. Regardless, being the brave artillerymen they were, each gun crew responded immediately and fired canister continuously in support of the brigade.³³

General Van Cleve faced a series of dilemmas now as command and control in the dense timber quickly began to dissolve in the face of heavy fire to his front. The situation was aggravated by the distractions provided by Carnes' battery and the realignment. The fight quickly dissolved into a fight controlled by the regimental commanders. Each commander, guided by his own instincts, moved men to plug gaps created as Beatty's front rank moved obliquely to the left. Typical was the reaction noted by Colonel George H. Cram of the 9th Kentucky who was trying to engage Carnes' Battery: "the 79th Indiana changed its position leaving space for my regiment, so accordingly I made a change of front, moved forward, and commenced firing." Colonel Cram was already concerned about a significant loss of his combat power. His regiment numbered only 187 men present for duty on the 19th. Just three days previously, his largest company had been detailed to division headquarters as the provost guard, and another 30 men were absent working with the supply train.³⁴

The situation in the 2nd Brigade was even more confused. Unaccustomed to commanding a brigade in combat, Colonel Dick tried to adjust to the situation and to properly execute the fight. His regimental

commanders, also new to command, took matters into their own hands. Lieutenant Colonel Frambes, Commander of the 59th Ohio, decided after exchanging shots for awhile with the 38th Alabama that the time was right to charge the Confederate regiment. The veterans of the 59th Ohio responded to the order immediately and charged at the double-quick with a loud cheer. This charge was successful and drove some of the Confederates away in confusion. However, the charge was an uncoordinated and isolated attack conducted solely by the 59th Ohio. Lieutenant Colonel Frambes soon realized he was far out in front of his own division and he decided to return to his place in line. After returning to his original position, he ordered his men to lie down and the regiment to continue fighting from the prone position.³⁵ Private J. A. Reep of the 19th Ohio, confused in the heavy fighting and looking for some direction as both sides put out a tremendous volume of fire, later wrote in his journal:

In the din of the battle's roar, no voice could be heard, and the commands were only a waste of breath. . . . The noise was bewildering; for the reason that we had no idea whether it was our³⁶ own line, or that of the enemy that was now doing all the firing.

Despite the confusion that reigned in General Van Cleve's ranks, both brigades successfully caused the Alabamians to go to ground. The inexperienced Confederates, holding their own, decided to brave the intense fire from Van Cleve's ranks by hugging the ground. Thus the fight continued for approximately one hour.

In all the noise and confusion, it was highly unlikely that Van Cleve's generalship could have had any immediate impact on the eight regiments. Each regiment was now, for all intents and purposes, fighting an independent action. There was a distinct lack of guidance from

the division commander in the first hour of fighting. The division commander should have set the conditions for his men to be successful before the first rounds were fired. In this respect, General Van Cleve failed. Just as the wound he incurred at Stones River handicapped Van Cleve at that battle, the noise and confusion now impaired him, both cases proving adequate excuses for his command silence. However, these impairments do not account for his inactivity or lack of forethought at Chickamauga, nor do they excuse him of his responsibility to lead his troops. There appears to have been only one order issued by General Van Cleve in the woods: the order to Colonel Dick, telling him to realign his brigade on General Beatty's second rank.³⁷ The regimental commanders and the brigade commander himself were all new to command and could have used the steadying hand of the division commander. Unfortunately, General Van Cleve remained silent.

While General Van Cleve found himself with his hands full to his front, another general officer found that he had time on his hands. General Reynolds commanded the 4th Division in Thomas' 14th Corps, including Wilder's, Turchin's, and Edward A. King's brigades. Earlier, General Thomas ordered that General Reynolds take Turchin's and King's brigades into action to support the right flank of the 14th Corps.³⁸ Wilder's brigade had been taken from Reynolds' control long before the fighting started at Chickamauga. General Reynolds, moving south along the LaFayette Road with his two remaining brigades, ordered General Turchin to move off the road to a position to the southeast of Kelly Field. Moving further south along the LaFayette Road to position his last brigade, General Reynolds came upon General Palmer still looking

for some support. Sent in earlier in the morning, General Palmer's brigades were running out of ammunition and were involved in a fight for their lives against Cheatham's division. General Palmer asked for additional support, and General Reynolds released three of the four regiments from his last brigade to Palmer. The three regiments sent to support Palmer were commanded by Colonel E. A. King. General Reynolds kept the largest regiment from King's brigade, the 75th Indiana and its artillery battery, the 19th Indiana Battery, commanded by Captain Samuel J. Harris as a reserve force. General Reynolds then looked around for a likely place to position his small force in order to establish either a second line of defense or a rallying point for men chased out of the timber. He chose the only open ground in the near vicinity, and positioned his men on a slight ridge which ran north and south along the center of Brotherton Field. He found Captain George R. Swallow's 7th Indiana Battery of Van Cleve's division and the 92nd Illinois of Wilder's brigade and their four mountain howitzers sitting idle. General Reynolds then collected them both and gainfully integrated them into his defense.³⁹

The Brotherton Field thus became a quasi-staging area for troops moving in and around the area while Van Cleve continued to fight Clayton. General Reynolds became an impromptu rear area commander guiding and directing the efforts of commanders and units using the LaFayette Road as a main supply route. Shortly afterwards, the 6th Ohio from Grose's brigade of Palmer's division came out of the fight to replenish its ammunition, but instead of returning to the fight, positioned itself in the Brotherton Field alongside the 19th Indiana

Battery.⁴⁰ Sometime after that, General Palmer requested additional support and General Reynolds reluctantly sent in his last fresh regiment, the 75th Indiana, which went in to fill the gap between Palmer and Van Cleve.⁴¹

The fight between General Van Cleve's two brigades and Clayton's brigade of Stewart's division had been going on for an hour with neither side gaining or giving any significant ground. Colonel King ordered his brigade off the road and into the treeline without either skirmishers or guide in search of Palmer's right flank. Instead, the brigade found the 26th Pennsylvania Battery and the backs of General Van Cleve's 1st Brigade. The men were ordered back out of the treeline and moved about 500 yards farther south down the LaFayette Road. It was approximately 1500 when Colonel King marched his three regiments off the road a second time. Once his troops were formed again in a line of battle, King marched forward through the trees. The 68th Indiana anchored the left while the 101st Indiana was positioned in the center and the 105th Ohio maintained the right flank.⁴² The sequence of events which was about to unfold would spell disaster for General Van Cleve and his men.

No one from Van Cleve's staff had coordinated for the placement of Colonel King's brigade, nor does it appear that Colonel King asked for or received any direct guidance. In fact, no one knew they were coming. Colonel King and his men looked for Palmer's right flank and found Van Cleve's men. Colonel King was killed in the next day's action, and unfortunately neither his nor any of his regimental commanders' reports found their way into the Official Records. After finding

the right flank of Van Cleve's troops, Colonel King moved forward through the timber but left a gap of approximately 400 to 500 yards between Colonel Dick's right flank and his own left.⁴³

As Colonel King marched his men into the timber, General Clayton and his soldiers from Alabama were running out of ammunition. Intent on conducting a bayonet charge, Clayton finally acquiesced to the recommendations of his regimental commanders, dropped the idea of a bayonet charge, and asked for assistance from his division commander.⁴⁴ General Stewart replaced Clayton's brigade with a fresh and more experienced brigade commanded by Brigadier General John C. Brown.⁴⁵ Brown's axis of advance was more in a northwesterly direction as opposed to Clayton's advance which was directly west. At approximately 1530, Brown's brigade marched to the northwest, and the skirmishers leading the brigade were engaged by King's brigade.⁴⁶ Colonel King then reoriented his brigade and faced a northeasterly direction. As Brown's main body followed behind the skirmishers with parade-ground precision, they remained unaware of King's presence in the dense underbrush. Brown's men passed in front of King's regiments, and their left flank received the brunt of a massed volley from King's men.⁴⁷ Unfortunately, King's volley had the undesired consequence of aiding Brown's men in locating the gap between King and Colonel Dick.

Lieutenant Colonel Frambes and his 59th Ohio were the first regiment to receive the onslaught of Brown's attack on the division's unprotected right flank. Brown's Confederates swarmed over the 59th Ohio and began to engage Aldrich's 44th Indiana. Lieutenant Colonel Frambes ordered his men to fall back to avoid being captured.⁴⁸

Lieutenant Colonel Aldrich was unaware of the 59th's disappearance and suddenly found his regiment to be the focus of Brown's attack. Lieutenant Colonel Aldrich quickly ordered his men to conduct a withdrawal.⁴⁹ Colonel Dick had previously reformed his entire brigade with all four regiments on line, but the damage created by Brown's exploitation of the gap could not be repaired. The men of the 2nd Brigade were uprooted one regiment at a time from the right to the left. Just as at Stones River, the pandemonium was beginning to adversely affect the regiments in the 1st Brigade. Colonel Stout, Commander of the 17th Kentucky, wrote of his experience against Brown and probably spoke for all the other regimental commanders when he said,

My regiment at once felt the enemy's fire upon the right flank and rear, and to escape capture fell back to the left and rear by companies; the first company first, then the second, and so on, until we were all in retreat to the left rear, the enemy in ⁵⁰greatly superior numbers advancing and firing with great rapidity.

At this juncture, another tragic mistake occurred. The artillery positioned by General Reynolds on the Brotherton Field behind General Van Cleve went into action. Lieutenant Colonel Henry G. Stratton, commanding his regiment for the first time in combat, suffered from the most criminal of circumstances. His men were retiring in good order when a battery located in the Brotherton Field began firing into the timber and several rounds impacted in and amongst his men of the 19th Ohio. All thoughts of an orderly withdrawal were lost as the friendly fire killed and wounded a number of men in the regiment, causing others to scatter.⁵¹ It was during this pandemonium that Colonel Cram's adjutant, Lieutenant J. H. Shepard, was wounded and fell into the

hands of the Confederates. Private Reep painted an accurate picture of the situation:

The artillery fire was dealing fearful destruction on the enemy, but at a tremendous cost to our two brigades. Many of our men, taking in the situation at a glance, saw at once that their only hope of escape . . . was to charge to the rear on our own guns. The distance, over 200 yards, was soon traversed by our flying and broken ranks. We saw chaos and confusion, as our men went plunging across that open field.⁵²

A large portion of the 1st Brigade rallied and fell in behind the 7th Indiana Battery.⁵³ A portion of the 9th Kentucky fell back to the 4th U.S. Artillery,⁵⁴ while portions of the 2nd brigade gathered around the 26th Pennsylvania.⁵⁵

General Beatty, furious at losing his tenuous grip on command and control of the men in his brigade, set out to find the culprit. It was later reported to General Beatty that the 19th Indiana Battery was responsible for firing the rounds. The battery commander of the 19th Indiana Battery, Captain Harris, disclosed that he had been ordered to begin firing.⁵⁶ Captain Harris stated that he commenced firing at about 1530 with spherical case shot over the heads of Van Cleve's troops who were then falling back. When it was possible, he used canister. Captain Harris thought his fires worked to the benefit of Van Cleve without endangering the lives of the infantrymen.⁵⁷ Private Reep put the blame squarely on one of the division's own batteries, the 7th Indiana, which continued to fire even as he and his buddies fell back through the battery.⁵⁸ Was a lone battery actually responsible for the artillery fratricide, or did all the batteries begin firing, making all equally responsible for the friendly casualties? Who gave the order to begin firing? Was it given to one battery or to all the batteries along

the ridge? The correct answers to these questions will never be known. There were any number of commanders who might have ordered the fire mission, if there was ever was such an order. Regimental commanders resting along the ridgeline who had already been involved in the fight might have tried to estimate the proper range to the Confederates and ordered the artillery into action. It could have been General Reynolds, who while continuing to execute his self-imposed command of the rear area, ordered the artillery into action. It is highly unlikely that Captain Harris initiated the fires and was the only culprit as General Beatty was led to believe. It is also very unlikely that in a formation of 21 guns placed practically hub to hub, one lone battery would fire independently while the others sat idly by. If this was in fact the case, the culprit would have easily been identified and an end put to the investigation.

Nevertheless, the force General Reynolds had assembled in the Brotherton Field was quite impressive and had sufficient combat power already assembled to halt a determined frontal assault. The 6th Ohio was there and fully resupplied with ammunition.⁵⁹ The 75th Indiana had already returned from its fight on General Palmer's right flank against Cheatham's and Stewart's divisions.⁶⁰ Colonel King, also heavily engaged to his front, had requested additional assistance from General Reynolds. Although General Reynolds ordered the 92nd Illinois to move forward and support Colonel King, the 92nd had only just begun to move and had barely taken its first step when out of the woods to its front burst the unorganized and terrorized men from General Van Cleve's division and some of the men of King's brigade.⁶¹ The flanking fire of

Brown's Confederate brigade and the artillery fratricides both worked in concert to unhinge Van Cleve's men. The force bolting out of the treeline represented eleven disorganized regiments which upon reaching Reynolds' position fell in with the three regiments already posted. Coupled with the artillery assembled, the force constituted a potentially deadly and formidable second line of defense. The artillery force alone consisted of a total of 21 guns: four from the 18th Indiana, six from the 19th Indiana, four from the 7th Indiana, and four guns from H Battery, 4th U.S. Artillery. The 26th Pennsylvania only brought three guns out of the timber and onto the ridge. The battery lost one gun to Stewart's division because it had waited until the Confederates got within 50 paces of the battery before withdrawing.⁶² The Confederates were also able to recapture Carnes' four guns and the battle flag of the 51st Tennessee.⁶³

Some unit histories written years later recalled that after retreating, the division rallied along the line of artillery and made several gallant stands before the Confederate attack finally over-powered it and forced it to withdraw. The horrible effects of combat seemed to have been distorted and softened with time.

Still on the east side of the road, General Stewart replaced Brown's brigade with his strongest brigade, commanded by Brigadier General William B. Bate.⁶⁴ Bate's brigade passed through the timber and charged across the road, and "on they came pell-mell." The Federal artillery went into action in earnest. Firing canister continuously did nothing to check the Confederate advance. Lieutenant Hurd noted that every man continued the fight on his own responsibility, and the second

line of defense held for 30 minutes.⁶⁵ However, this was probably an optimistic estimate. The 26th Pennsylvania Battery fired canister into the Confederate ranks until it exhausted its load of ammunition.⁶⁶ The 7th Indiana Battery also opened up with a rapid fire using canister. The battery commander, Captain Swallow, ordered his men to fire until their basic load of canister was exhausted.⁶⁷ The battery kept up the fire even while men from two of their division's regiments continued to fall back through the battery. General Van Cleve twice attempted to send a staff officer to General Crittenden to inform him of the desperate nature of the fighting around the Brotherton House. The first officer eventually reached the corps commander, but Crittenden could do nothing to help his subordinate division commander, having his own hands full at the moment. A bit later, a second officer could not even break through the Confederate lines to deliver the message.⁶⁸

Then by pure accident, but timely for the Confederates, an unplanned and uncoordinated supporting attack entered into the fray. Fulton's brigade of Johnson's division advanced northwest across the LaFayette Road, filed into the treeline, and fired into the southern flank of the Federals.⁶⁹ Fulton's brigade succeeded in causing a similar effect among the troops as Brown's brigade had accomplished earlier. The Federals, already lacking firm command and control and now flanked again from the right to the left, began to disintegrate. Men began to flee from their positions, which uprooted the regiments in quick succession. The effect of Fulton's attack coupled with an aggressive frontal assault by Bate's brigade effectively served to destroy any will to resist by General Van Cleve's men.

Many of the officers trying to control the men were killed or wounded in futile attempts to rally their men and continue the fight. The commander of the 13th Ohio, Lieutenant Colonel Mast, was killed, and his subordinate, Major Snider, was severely wounded as they tried to rally their regiment.⁷⁰ Command of the 13th Ohio then fell on the shoulders of Captain H. G. Cosgrove. Lieutenant Woods, a staff officer on Colonel Dick's brigade staff, was also mortally wounded while trying to rally the crumbling ranks. Two of General Van Cleve's own staff officers were hit by rifle fire. His adjutant Captain Otis thought himself wounded but actually had suffered only a bad bruise when hit by a spent ball. Captain T. F. Murdock, one of Van Cleve's aides, was less fortunate. He was shot through the neck, knocked off his horse and died the next afternoon. Captain Murdock's horse was killed by rifle fire in the same instant. Both officers were hit as General Van Cleve and his small command group were attempting to rally their men.⁷¹

Lieutenant Hurd had optimistically reported holding the line for 30 minutes. An enlisted man from the same regiment saw the action in a different light, noting:

There was no man who went out of that timber with any expectation of reaching a place of safety, or any degree of it, until we reached the timber beyond and west of the Brotherton Farm.⁷²

Van Cleve's men quickly turned into an unorganized mob and began running directly west. The rout could not be contained and General Van Cleve's men did not stop running until they found the safety of the reverse slope of a hill almost a mile from Brotherton's house.⁷³ From his position on the field, General Stewart observed,

It being necessary to relieve Brown, Bate's brigade was brought up and received by the enemy as hot a fire as had successively greeted Clayton and Brown. Attacking, however, with their usual impetuosity they drove the enemy back, forcing him to withdraw his batteries and to abandon one position after another.⁷⁴

General Reynolds tried to stop the men as did other commanders and staff officers, but one man's attempt to stave off the defeat will always be remembered another way. Brigadier General William B. Hazen, a brigade commander from General Palmer's division, had pulled his brigade off line just to the north of Brotherton Field so his men could replenish their ammunition when he grew concerned over the sounds of heavy combat coming from that direction. He rode down to investigate and ran into General Van Cleve just after General Bate's Confederates had penetrated the defensive position. According to Hazen, General Van Cleve was riding wildly up the road with tears streaming down his cheeks and asking for additional troops, saying he could not control a single man in his division.⁷⁵ This account probably contains an element of the truth, but it is nothing more than a believable exaggeration of the truth. Any commander would suffer a hard jolt upon seeing his own men routed and killed regardless of fault or circumstances. General Van Cleve was not the first and will certainly not be the last leader to shed a tear over the loss of his men. However, his ability to retain his senses and continue the fight are the questions which need to be raised and evaluated, while discounting possible distortions of the truth. However, General Van Cleve did take the loss of his men to heart. The general was observed later in the evening with his arms around the neck of his faithful horse Bessie, mourning the heavy casualties.⁷⁶

General Stewart, sensing the success of the penetration, ordered both Clayton's and Brown's brigades forward.⁷⁷ The Confederate division now began the exploitation phase of its attack. The momentum of the assault carried it beyond Brotherton Field, through the timber, and out into Dyer's field and the Tanyard. General Hazen's reaction to the penetration was to move his brigade south.⁷⁸ This he did, throwing his own brigade against the northern shoulder of Stewart's penetration. On his own initiative, Colonel Charles G. Harker and his brigade from Wood's division attacked north into the southern flank of Fulton's Confederate brigade.⁷⁹ General Rosecrans, who could observe the fighting from the Widow Glenn's house, ordered General Negley's division to attack into the southern shoulder of the Confederate penetration.⁸⁰ General Thomas ordered one of his divisions, commanded by General Brannan to attack south into the northern shoulder of the penetration.⁸¹ General Stewart realized that without additional support he could not fight off the forces currently moving against him. Therefore, he pulled his division back to the east side of LaFayette road to the point where his division had first engaged General Van Cleve's troops.

The great majority of Van Cleve's troops had scattered to the wind, but some men lingered, gathering together in squad-sized elements. Now they either were directed towards the rear or attempted to fight back in any little way they could. One such example was the noble effort of Lieutenant W. S. Erb of the 19th Ohio. After directing about 12 men to the designated assembly area, he noticed a lone artillery piece oriented in their direction. Deciding that it was one of their own pieces captured by the Confederates, Lieutenant Erb attempted to

liberate the gun. As he led the 12 men closer to the gun, the Confederates fired on the squad of men, thereby rendering the decision to leave the artillery piece with its captors much easier.⁸²

It had been an unbelievably hard day for General Van Cleve and his men. What else could the division commander possibly have accomplished while his men fought and died in the confused fighting among the pine trees? Positioned in the rear of his two brigades, the general and his staff were only 100 to 150 yards from the LaFayette Road. The road was clearly visible, affording him and his staff officers easy access to use the road for traveling to request assistance, to identify the fall-back position on Brotherton Field, to identify and coordinate the positioning of Colonel King's brigade, or to keep the artillery under control. Instead, General Van Cleve appears to have remained in the reactive mode through the entire fight, sitting on his horse wearing his own set of blinders. He seemed to be oblivious to anything but the fighting directly to his front and yet unable to control that fight. A commander who worries only of his present predicament and does not think forward to his next step must always be satisfied with constantly reacting to his enemy. A commander with a vision of the fight and how the fight may unfold can take the initiative and cause the enemy to react to his own moves as did the division commander to General Van Cleve's left and the brigade commander to Van Cleve's right. Both of the commanders came out of their fights to coordinate for their next move or to ask for assistance.

Earlier in the afternoon, General Van Cleve had gone forward with his 1st and 2nd Brigades, leaving Colonel Barnes and his four

regiments with only simple and vague guidance. At approximately 1330, about the same time Van Cleve stepped off into the timber at the Brotherton House, Lieutenant Colonel Starling, the corps chief of staff, arrived in Colonel Barnes' position and ordered his brigade forward into action. Colonel Barnes asked the corps chief of staff to be a bit more specific. In response, Lieutenant Colonel Starling told the inexperienced brigade commander that his men were to move forward immediately and engage the Confederates on the east side of the LaFayette Road toward the Chickamauga Creek. Lieutenant Colonel Starling continued to say the army was driving the Confederates and the brigade could assist by attacking into the open flank of the Confederates.⁸³ In what perhaps became frighteningly common guidance given to subordinate commanders during the battle, Lieutenant Colonel Starling left Colonel Barnes with one last jewel of guidance. He told Barnes to "go in and act on your own judgment." Given his marching orders, such as they were, Colonel Barnes "accordingly did go in."⁸⁴

Colonel Barnes at least had the gift of common sense and recognized that his regimental commanders possessed the combat experience he so desperately needed at that point in time. He formed an impromptu chain of command, putting Colonel R. W. McClain in command of the brigade's first rank, which was composed of the 51st Ohio and the 8th Kentucky. The second rank was commanded by Colonel P. T. Swain and was composed of the 99th Ohio and the 35th Indiana.⁸⁵ Colonel Barnes moved his brigade from Lee and Gordon's Mill at the double-quick to the sound of the guns. The LaFayette Road still generally separated the two armies. The Confederates were to the east of the road and as his

brigade neared the sounds of battle, Colonel Barnes decided to leave the artillery on the only open commanding terrain available.

Without any further guidance, Colonel Barnes did the best that could be expected of any commander in his position. He oriented his brigade in the general direction of the fight and prepared to enter the fray. He made a last ditch effort to gain even small bits of information before committing his men to such a vague situation. He sent his aides looking for either the division or corps commander. None of the aides were successful in their searches, so Colonel Barnes did as ordered and attacked.⁸⁶

Colonel Barnes marched his brigade onto the eastern portion of the Viniard Field and found out later that he formed the right support of General William P. Carlin's Federal brigade of General Davis' division. Barnes himself understood his own right flank would be supported by Colonel Harker from General Wood's division, but Harker had already been ordered further to the left of the army.⁸⁷ The field Barnes' men were to fight upon was overgrown and covered with dense underbrush. As soon as Colonel Barnes entered the southwestern portion of the field, he was immediately greeted with Confederate rifle fire. Barnes' men marched forward and were successful in driving the Confederates of Brigadier General Jerome B. Robertson's brigade back for several hundred yards, even though a regiment from Wilder's brigade created some confusion as it retreated through Barnes' ranks.⁸⁸

Colonel Barnes continued to push his brigade forward. His chosen direction of attack actually placed his men in front of one regiment from Carlin's brigade and masked their fires. Robertson's

Confederates were reinforced just in time by Colonel Robert C. Trigg's brigade of Floridians. Colonel Trigg attacked Barnes' brigade and was also able to find the soft right flank of Barnes' first rank. Colonel Barnes, now outflanked and overwhelmed by superior numbers, fought a delaying action as he withdrew from the field. At some point in this action, the commander of the 8th Kentucky was captured, and the burden of command falling on Major John S. Clark.⁸⁹ Unfortunately for General Carlin, some of his men from the 101st Ohio whose fire had been masked by Barnes now fled the field as they were stampeded by some of Barnes' men.⁹⁰ The officers of Barnes' brigade were successful in rallying their men on the west side of the LaFayette Road. Supported by the fires from the 3rd Wisconsin Battery, the men were able to check the Confederates' advances. Colonel Barnes' first fight lasted only 25 minutes from the time his brigade began its attack to the time it checked the Confederate advance.⁹¹ In his first fight, Barnes' brigade successfully defended the extreme right flank of the Army of the Cumberland. General Crittenden gave credit to Colonel Barnes and his entire brigade for refusing the right flank of the army to General Bragg's Confederates.⁹² Colonel Barnes and his brigade remained in this position for the remainder of the day and into the evening with only minor repositioning in order to safeguard his open flanks.

By the time the sun settled behind the battlefield, some of the men in the division had been in action for over 24 continuous hours; most of the men had suffered through four of these hours in terror. Every regiment suffered substantial casualties. All night long, men continued to filter back into the division assembly area, which was

situated to the west of Crawfish Springs Road. At first, the routine duties were carried out as roll call was taken, casualties noted, and ammunition replenished. Then coffee was made and the men tried to lie down to get some sleep. Some men wondered whether the next day, the Sabbath, would bring continued fighting. All of them passed the night cold and shivering without any blankets and without any sleep. The campfires remained cheerless as the men huddled closer and closer together towards the warmth of the fire. One strong soul took note of the day's action:

Some of the brigades and divisions had been routed and sent to the rear; but notwithstanding we had been driven from our position, we were still on the ground, ready to renew the fight the next day.⁹³

Endnotes

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- ³The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and the Confederate Armies (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1890), Vol. 30, Series I. 606.
- ⁴Ibid., 713.
- ⁵Ibid., 607.
- ⁶Ibid., 803.
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- ⁸Ibid.
- ⁹History of the Seventy-Ninth Regiment Indiana Volunteer Infantry (Indianapolis, IN: The Hollenbeck Press, 1899), 90.
- ¹⁰Hurd.
- ¹¹The War of the Rebellion, 993.
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- ¹³Ibid., 808.
- ¹⁴Hurd.
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- ¹⁹Ibid., 811.
- ²⁰Captain William W. Carnes, Papers, 135.
- ²¹The War of the Rebellion, 811.
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- ²³The War of the Rebellion, 811.
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26 The War of the Rebellion, 818.

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30 Ibid., 365.

31 Ibid., 401.

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33 Ibid., 820.

34 Ibid., 814.

35 Ibid., 833.

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38 Ibid., 440.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid., 796.

41 Ibid., 440.

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45 Ibid., 370.

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⁵⁰Ibid., 816.

⁵¹Ibid., 818-819.

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⁵⁴Ibid., 813.

⁵⁵Ibid., 823.

⁵⁶Ibid., 808.

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⁶⁰Ibid., 440.

⁶¹Ibid.

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⁶³Ibid., 363.

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⁶⁷Ibid., 836.

⁶⁸Ibid., 803.

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⁷²Reep.

⁷³The War of the Rebellion, 880.

⁷⁴Ibid., 362.

⁷⁵William B. Hazen, A Narrative of Military Service (Boston, MA: Ticknor and Company, 1885), 127-128.

⁷⁶Horatio P. Van Cleve, "The Van Cleve Family: Pioneers in Minnesota", Minnesota Historical Society, 33.

⁷⁷The War of the Rebellion, 362.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 762.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, 691.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, 56.

⁸¹*Ibid.*, 250.

⁸²*Reep.*

⁸³The War of the Rebellion, 839.

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⁸⁵*Ibid.*

⁸⁶*Ibid.*

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 691.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, 839.

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⁹⁰*Ibid.*, 516.

⁹¹*Ibid.*, 840

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CHAPTER 6
DYER FIELD: 20 SEPTEMBER 1863

The next day we were pushed early into action, moving hither and thither to the support of our troops wherever they were hard pressed.

Colonel P. T. Swain
Commander, 99th Ohio

Colonel Barnes and his brigade were ordered to rejoin the division in its assembly area during the night of the 19th. The lead elements of the brigade began to close on the assembly area at 0200 in the morning.¹ Some of the stragglers arrived as late as 0500.² The men tried to make themselves as comfortable as those who were already there trying get some sleep. The council of war that was held between the army, corps, and division commanders determined that Van Cleve's division would be designated as a reserve and maintain a position to the rear of the army.³ Now that Colonel Barnes had closed on his position, General Van Cleve had all three of his brigades under his command ready for whatever might come in the morning. However, the division was destined to become separated during the day's fight. Each brigade of the division would fight its own battle in three separate and distinct brigade actions. Through the unexplainable circumstances of combat, only the three artillery batteries would fight under the leadership of their commanding general.

The men were awakened by their commander long before daybreak. As they slowly roused themselves, they shook off dull headaches and rubbed their eyes which were filled with smoke from the morning campfires. The day dawned hazy and cold, and the only sustenance the men had for the day was a cup of coffee and a small piece of bacon with a piece of cracker. The men suffered from intense anxiety and ate their small rations in mechanical-like motions as they thought about the previous day's fight and worried about what the present day would bring.⁴

The 21st Corps commander began searching for Van Cleve's division at daylight. He finally located Van Cleve's men in their assembly area eating their meager meal and completing their resupply of ammunition. General Crittenden told the division commander to remain in his current location to the left of Wood's division for the time being.⁵ The sun rose higher, warming the earth, but remnants of a heavy fog yet hung over the landscape. The battlefield remained largely quiet except for the sounds of troops marching from point to point, artillery caissons moving into position, and ammunition wagons passing out their contents. From their position, Van Cleve's men could also see the long files of the army's ambulances, accompanied by stretcher bearers and surgeons working on the wounded from the previous day's battle and preparing for the wounded that the imminent battle was sure to bring. Commanders with their staffs and orderlies passed back and forth along with couriers sending out the day's orders.⁶

At 0800 the first sounds of distant skirmishing broke the morning stillness, much to the relief of the men.⁷ At about 0900, General

Crittenden ordered General Van Cleve to release one brigade to General Wood, the 1st Division commander, who moved forward to fill General Negley's position.⁸ Colonel Barnes dutifully formed his men and marched off in search of the 1st Division commander. Once again Colonel Barnes and his brigade were chosen for the tasking, probably because he and his brigade were the least experienced and most expendable. Meanwhile, the remainder of the 3rd Division, the 1st and 2nd Brigades, were ordered forward to occupy a new position to the rear of General Wood's division. This position allowed Van Cleve to remain within easy supporting distance of Wood. General Van Cleve was specifically directed to some high ground about 400 yards forward and to the left of his division's assembly area.⁹ As Van Cleve's division moved forward, the sounds of combat became heavy at several points along the line--particularly on the extreme left and the right center.

Upon reaching the hill which bordered the western portion of Dyer Field, General Van Cleve posted all three of his artillery batteries on the crest and placed his infantry in support among the guns.¹⁰ The men were formed in a standard two-brigade formation, with two regiments up and two regiments back, each regiment in a double column. This time however, 1st Brigade was posted to the right of the 2nd Brigade.

Earlier in the morning, General Rosecrans moved his headquarters to a new forward position located just southwest of the Dyer House. Now that he was able to observe the terrain, General Rosecrans was dissatisfied with General Van Cleve's dispositions. He was concerned that Van Cleve's infantry would not be able to quickly respond

to any emergency at the front. Consequently, he ordered Van Cleve's infantry forward once again. This move was only 150 to 200 yards to the forward slope of the hill. He also ordered General Van Cleve to cut roads through a small stand of trees that bordered Dyer Field in order to facilitate the forward movement of the artillery batteries.¹¹ General Rosecrans personally issued the guidance to General Van Cleve. The men of the 79th Indiana witnessed the conversation between the two general officers and remarked that their looks were not very reassuring.¹²

By 1000, the battle became a general fight all along the front. General Van Cleve was in the process of carrying out the first set of instructions when the army commander ordered the men forward to engage the enemy wherever there was an open space in the line.¹³ General Crittenden decided to accompany General Van Cleve into battle--the last of his divisions under Crittenden's direct command and control.¹⁴

The two-brigade division marched east through Dyer Field and crossed the Glenn-Kelly Road with 1st Brigade in the lead and 2nd Brigade following in support. General Van Cleve had also ordered the artillery forward with the two brigades. Nearing the treeline on the east side of the road, the division halted while General Beatty sent skirmishers forward through the timber. The skirmishers returned after a short time and informed General Beatty that they were actually directly behind Colonel Harker's brigade of General Wood's division, who were already formed in a line of battle. General Beatty immediately reported the situation to General Van Cleve and asked for guidance.¹⁵

The division commander ordered the men to lie down behind Wood's division while he went in search of additional guidance.

In the meantime, General Wood passed information back to Major Mendenhall, the Corps Chief of Artillery, that there was really no practical use for artillery in the dense timber and thick underbrush. It was impossible to get artillery batteries through the woods, much less put them to any effective use. The batteries would be of greater value positioned to the rear as a second line of defense. Based on General Crittenden's guidance, Major Mendenhall had all three batteries of General Van Cleve's division plus Lieutenant Cushing and his H Battery, 4th U. S. Artillery retire back to the hill that bordered Dyer Field.¹⁶

General Crittenden, now joining General Van Cleve, was surprised to find the men halted and lying down. He ordered them to continue to move to the left until they could find an open space in the battle line to occupy and engage the Confederates. This command was promptly obeyed, and General Beatty moved to the left but did not find any opening.¹⁷ General Van Cleve finally ordered Beatty to continue to move to the left until he could find a weak spot where the division could offer some support.¹⁸

The situation was still under control in the center of the Federal Army when a messenger sent from General Thomas found General Crittenden. General Thomas' message announced that he was still looking for additional support on his left and asked General Crittenden for reinforcements. In turn, General Crittenden directed the rider on to General Rosecrans' headquarters with the request. He was not going to release his last division unless ordered to do so. This brief flurry of

activity occurred while Van Cleve and his men were still marching to the left in search of a soft spot in the line. Crittenden was satisfied that whatever the decision of the army commander may be, at least Van Cleve's division was still moving in the appropriate general direction.¹⁹

General Beatty found the spot he felt met his commander's guidance. The two brigades finally came to rest in the rear of General Brannan's division, who was just then heavily engaged with the Confederates. Beatty ordered the men to halt and lie down. The front ranks of his regiments were located directly behind the rear ranks of Colonel John M. Connell's men who belonged to Brannan's division of the 14th Corps.²⁰ General Van Cleve's men had just settled down behind Connell's brigade when Rosecrans' answer to Thomas' request came down in the form of an order for Van Cleve to move his men to the left to the support of Thomas' 14th Corps.²¹

The wheels of fate had already begun turning for General Van Cleve's men and the entire Army of the Cumberland at this point. At approximately 1015 in the morning, General Thomas sent a staff officer to General Brannan's position. The staff officer delivered Thomas' message ordering Brannan to move his division north to support the 14th Corps. Brannan was apprehensive to obey such a order as he felt he occupied a critical defensive position and protected General Reynolds' right flank. To pull out of line would leave a gap in the Federal defensive line as well as leave Reynolds' men without any flank security. Brannan conferred with Reynolds who told him to go ahead and pull out of the line to the support of Thomas.

Later, Captain Kellogg, an aide to General Thomas, explained the situation to Reynolds. Reynolds, who did not want to be left with his right flank open to the Confederates, requested the captain to explain the predicament to Rosecrans. Kellogg dutifully rode to Rosecrans and explained the situation. In response, Rosecrans had one of his aides write an order for General Wood to move his division to the left to fill the supposed gap caused by Brannan's departure. Unfortunately, Brannan had not departed to support Thomas, and General Wood began moving his division to fill the nonexistent gap.

Prior to General Van Cleve's latest order from General Rosecrans, General Wood responded to his latest order and pulled his three brigades out of the line, one of which was General Van Cleve's 3rd Brigade, and marched to the left. General Wood's departure now indeed created a gap in the Federal line of defense. Colonel Connell's brigade was left in the unfortunate position of having its right flank completely uncovered and without support. Even more precarious was the situation which now existed for General Van Cleve and his men. They were now lying down behind a brigade which, unknown to them, could easily be flanked and driven back if the Confederate Army were to find and exploit the three-quarter-mile gap.

Van Cleve's division was formed with the 1st Brigade in the lead, butted up against Connell's rear rank, while the 2nd Brigade was located to the rear of the 1st Brigade. The 1st Brigade formation was laid out with the 19th Ohio on the right and the 79th Indiana on the left of the front rank. In the second rank, the 9th Kentucky was on the right and the 17th Kentucky on the left. The front rank of the 2nd

Brigade consisted of the 59th Ohio positioned to the right of the 44th Indiana. In the second rank, the 13th Ohio was on the left and the 86th Indiana located on the right.

General Van Cleve was with the 2nd Brigade in the rear of the formation when he received the order attaching his division to Thomas' 14th Corps. With the 2nd Brigade close at hand, General Van Cleve ordered to Colonel Dick and his regiments to move first.²² Colonel Dick immediately put his regiments on the Glenn-Kelly Road moving north, while General Beatty kept his troops on the ground as they waited for their turn to come off the line and move out. Across the fields to their front, the Confederates were also trying to adjust to their commander's wishes. General James Longstreet and his combat veterans from the Army of Northern Virginia were trying to form their divisions for an attack against the center of the Federal Army. Quite by accident, General Longstreet's veterans, who only two months previously had been engaged at Gettysburg, had formed a "Grand Column" composed of three divisions in column aimed directly at the gap created by General Wood's departure. While General Rosecrans and his staff were busy identifying a nonexistent gap and issuing orders to bring Van Cleve's division forward, Colonel Connell observed the Confederates forming to his front at a distance of no more than 300 yards. Connell sent an aide to inform his division commander of the situation. General Brannan replied with a promise of support for Connell's right flank if the need arose.²³ Soon after the answer from General Brannan arrived, General Van Cleve's men came into position behind his rear ranks. Colonel Connell incorrectly assumed that these men were there to support his

right flank²⁴ for General Van Cleve had just received the orders attaching his division to the 14th Corps. Both brigades had barely gotten into position behind Connell before Van Cleve began moving his brigades to the left. The 2nd Brigade had commenced its movement north when General Longstreet gave the go-ahead for the Confederate attack.

Still worried about his unsupported right flank, Colonel Connell threw some flankers from the 82nd Indiana out to warn him of a Confederate attack from that direction. He also began to reorient his regiments and had just ordered them to change their front to the right flank when disaster struck.²⁵ General Bushrod Johnson, whose division spearheaded the "Grand Column," crossed the LaFayette Road and almost immediately found, much to his surprise, that he was receiving fire only to his flanks and not to his front. General Johnson decided to continue his advance and exploit his unexpected good fortune. Colonel Connell, who received the brunt of the Confederate attack, reported,

These orders had scarcely been delivered before the enemy, making an oblique advance, following almost the retiring division on my right, most furiously and in tremendous force, attacked my front and flank.²⁶

Connell's brigade almost instantly collapsed. His front rank attempted to change front, but, unable to complete the movement and deliver any appreciable volume of fire, broke and ran for the rear as the Confederate column closed to within 75 yards. The second rank attempted to move up to continue the fight, but the Confederates were already nearly inside Connell's breastworks and Connell's soldiers fled to the rear in confusion.²⁷ A brigade's worth of men and artillery fled to the rear with the Confederates close on their heels.

General Beatty's men, still lying down, were unaware of the desperate situation to their front, when all at once men, artillery, and horses ran over the 19th Ohio in a race for the rear. Lieutenant Colonel Stratton remembered

falling in behind two lines of troops and an artillery battery when the men to their front became warmly engaged. After a brief resistance, they retired in confusion, with the battery breaking through his ranks and disorganizing his men.²⁸

The 79th Indiana suffered the same fate. Colonel Knefler noted that his men were literally trampled down and overrun by artillery.²⁹ Men were crippled and wounded from the stampede. Meanwhile, Colonel Dick and his men continued to march to the left of the army, oblivious to the disaster that befell their comrades--a disaster Dick's brigade narrowly escaped. Cut off from his division commander and without any additional guidance from any senior officers, Colonel Dick marched into Kelly Field in an attempt to carry out the last set of instructions he received.

The defensive line at Dyer Field was rapidly falling apart as unit cohesion disintegrated. With the memory of their previous days' fight still fresh in their minds, the men of the 1st Brigade probably had no stomach left for rallying to fight a determined adversary bent on achieving victory. Officers once again made gallant attempts to steady their troops with personal examples of bravery. Officers from all four of the regiments in the brigade grabbed their respective colors and waved them aloft as they tried to rally troops who had lost all sense of duty. Typical were the efforts of First Lieutenant Phil Reefy of the 19th Ohio. Waving the regimental colors, he was able to rally about 30 to 35 men and make a defiant stand in the wake of the Confederate breakthrough.³⁰ However, effective command and control ceased to exist in

the 1st Brigade, and the tide of men flowing to the rear eventually carried the officers with it. Joined by Colonel Knefler, General Beatty was cut off from the majority of his troops and staff, and the two officers were powerless to stop the flow of men to the rear.³¹ The 17th Kentucky lost their lieutenant colonel during the rout; Lieutenant Colonel Vaughan was shot through the leg as he tried to rally his regiment and was carried off the field. The Sergeant Major of the 17th was shot through both legs in the same action.³²

However, not all attempts to rally the men were wholly unsuccessful. There were still duty-bound men who did follow their commanders' lead. The 9th Kentucky, under the firm control of Colonel Cram, only fell back 25 to 30 yards, reformed and charged forward to regain the breastworks. The regiment was only momentarily successful in regaining possession of the position before it was completely outflanked and compelled to fall back. The 9th Kentucky eventually was able to find its way to support General Brannan's troops who had fallen back and taken up a new position on Horseshoe Ridge.³³ After losing two critical leaders, Colonel Stout, his colors, and about 100 men joined the growing crowd with General Brannan's division on the ridgeline.³⁴ Lieutenant Reefy and his small band of men from the 19th Ohio along with a few stragglers from the 79th Indiana also joined General Brannan's troops on Horseshoe Ridge. The men of the 19th Ohio took up a position to the right of Captain Josiah Church's 1st Michigan Light Battery.³⁵ Both officers and men recognized the importance of holding what was essentially the decisive terrain on Horseshoe Ridge even though no one was directed or ordered to the spot. Many of the men who joined in the

defense of the hills had found their way into the defenses quite by accident. Officers dropped their swords and picked up rifles and ammunition and prepared to fight alongside their privates in defense of the position.

There were other senior commanders on the field trying to bring some control to the scene in Dyer Field. General Crittenden was immediately cut off on his right and left by the Confederate breakthrough. He had only one course of action: to return to the hill that held Van Cleve's batteries, Battery H, 4th U. S. Artillery, and the 8th Indiana Battery. Unaware of the force assembling on the ridgeline to the north of the batteries, General Crittenden perceived that the guns represented the last hope of containing the situation. He galloped to the hill and found to his disgust that not one company of infantry was to be found to support the artillerymen. The situation grew worse as each minute ticked by. The battery commander of Battery H, 4th U. S. Artillery, Captain Cushing, came up to the General and informed him that Confederate cavalry was already passing through the rear of the position.³⁶

Desperate to find support for the artillery, General Crittenden finally found one commander who was successful in rallying 60 to 70 men to aid the cannoneers. As he observed these actions, General Crittenden remarked of this one commander, who was none other than General H. P. Van Cleve, that he was a pure-hearted and brave officer.³⁷ Unfortunately, the infantry support was simply too little, too late. The fight for the hill boiled down to the five artillery batteries against Longstreet's Corps. The battery commanders had previously been

restrained from firing canister per instructions from Major Mendenhall. The orders were given with the best of intentions for Mendenhall was afraid of hitting Federal troops with friendly cannon fire.³⁸ With the situation now truly desperate and the Confederates clearly in sight, all five batteries began to fire canister continuously. Undaunted, the Confederates gained possession of a small strip of timber to the front of the batteries and began to systematically disable the guns by killing the horses and the cannoneers. The combined fires from the five batteries were not enough to stop the Confederate forward momentum.

Van Cleve's artillerymen began to pull their guns off the hill to keep them from falling into the hands of the Confederates. Captain Stevens of the 26th Pennsylvania was killed instantly attempting to withdraw the last of his guns off the hill. The 26th left the position, leaving behind its dead commander and two of its guns.³⁹ Captain Swallow of the 7th Indiana Battery left behind Lieutenant Fislar and two men, plus one complete Parrott section still intact.⁴⁰ Corporal John Fletcher of the 3rd Wisconsin was captured while fighting alongside his piece, yet he was able to escape his captors who were more concerned with possessing the artillery pieces rather than the individual cannon crewmen. The Confederate assault of the position was complete in a matter of minutes, and the 3rd Wisconsin was able to save only one gun out of the entire battery.⁴¹ The guns that were left behind fell into the hands of the Confederates who immediately turned them around and fired on the retreating Federals. Van Cleve's three batteries lost a total of two 6-pounder smoothbore cannons, one 12-pounder howitzer, five 10-pounder Parrotts, and two 6-pounder James rifles.⁴² Once this last

position was overrun, officers and men from the Center and Right Wings of the Army, including Generals Crittenden and Van Cleve, found their way to the Dry Valley Road and began a slow and orderly retreat to Rossville, then further north to the safety of Chattanooga. General Van Cleve's participation in the Battle of Chickamauga ended when he found the Dry Valley Road around noontime on the 20th.

Colonel Dick and the men of the 2nd Brigade were also destined to suffer through the same confusion and terror which gripped the 1st Brigade on that second day of the battle. Colonel Dick had already moved his brigade at the double-quick for about 500 or 600 yards after receiving the order from General Van Cleve to move to the support of the 14th Corps.⁴³ He was leading his men to support an unspecified battery positioned in the woods. Upon reaching the designated battery location, he could not find any artillery battery nor anyone else who might require his aid. Colonel Dick was forced to act on his own initiative as he was no longer capable of communicating with General Van Cleve who had been cut off by the Confederate breakthrough. General Van Cleve sent his aide Lieutenant Knoble with orders presumably for Colonel Dick, but unfortunately Knoble was captured in the process of delivering them. Colonel Dick, acting independently, marched his brigade onto Kelly Field and fell in directly behind Colonel Van Derveer and his 3rd Brigade of General Brannan's division.⁴⁴

Earlier in the morning, Brigadier General John Beatty (no relation to Brigadier General Samuel Beatty of Van Cleve's division) of General Negley's division had assumed personal responsibility for the security of the army's far left flank. General Beatty had used the

troops under his command and at his disposal to fight for time. He had already lost two of his regiments when both were decimated in a feeble attempt to stop a division-sized attack launched by Confederate Major General John C. Breckinridge.⁴⁵ Breckinridge's troops easily brushed aside Beatty's men and began to attack straight south along the LaFayette Road. General Beatty realized that, if unstopped, the Confederates could potentially unhinge the Federal defense with a penetration from the north. Beatty pulled back his two remaining regiments and positioned them behind the three regiments belonging to his fellow Brigade Commander Colonel Timothy R. Stanley.⁴⁶ Beatty situated the combined force precisely where it could best blunt the Confederate drive: on the west side of the LaFayette Road across from Kelly Field. However, General Beatty was concerned about leaving so small force to fend for itself and went in search of idle troops and found Colonel Dick's brigade. Finding Colonel Dick's brigade was like an answer to a prayer. He ordered Dick's men across LaFayette Road to support Colonel Stanley's 2nd Brigade. Colonel Dick quickly reformed his men and fell in behind Stanley's brigade.⁴⁷

Just prior to Colonel Dick's arrival, Colonel Stanley decided to attack the Confederates belonging to Brigadier General Adams' brigade of Breckinridge's division. The attack was a success, causing the Confederates to fall back. The action also resulted in the wounding and capture of General Adams himself. Upon Colonel Dick's timely arrival on the scene, Colonel Stanley gave him some quick guidance to prepare for a Confederate counterattack expected at any moment. Colonel Stanley established a hasty defensive line with his brigade and informed Colonel

Dick that his men would check any further Confederate advance. Stanley added that if the fire became too heavy for his men, he would fall back through Dick's supporting ranks. Colonel Stanley completed the instructions by reassuring Colonel Dick that his men would remain on the field and continue the fight even if they did have to fall back.⁴⁸

The Confederate counterattack began only minutes later and was initiated with artillery fire which impacted all along the Federal line. Colonel Stanley, with General Beatty looking on, returned fire until he could no longer stand against the Confederate advance and had to fall back through Colonel Dick's ranks. According to both General Beatty and Colonel Stanley, Colonel Dick and his brigade thought only of saving themselves, because when Colonel Stanley turned around looking for his support, Dick's 2nd Brigade had already fled the scene without firing a shot.⁴⁹

Colonel Dick's story differs considerably from Beatty's and Stanley's. Colonel Dick stated that he moved forward to support Stanley on his own initiative. At the opening stage of the Confederate attack, Stanley's troops gave way in confusion and retreated in disorder through the 2nd Brigade's ranks. However, Colonel Dick and his men were able to reorganize and return fire for approximately 15 minutes before being overwhelmed by greater numbers. Colonel Dick then rallied his command 500 yards to the rear on the brow of a hill in support of a battery. He later gathered up additional members of his command and marched to the assistance of General Brannan. According to Colonel Dick, his brigade continued to withstand successive Confederate attacks against their position which was presumably on Horseshoe Ridge. His men were eventually

driven off the battlefield when superior numbers were able to reach around Dick's flank.⁵⁰

The careers of officers and the reputations of regiments, brigades, and divisions were made and enhanced if they could add their names to the list of units who fought on Snodgrass Hill or Horseshoe Ridge. Conversely, unit as well as personal reputations were shattered if they fled from the battlefield. Unfortunately for Colonel Dick, none of his claims have been verified by commanders who might have observed his actions or would have benefited from his assistance. It is very unlikely his claims would have escaped unnoticed, and without any independent verification, it is doubtful the heroic acts described by Colonel Dick ever actually occurred.

The regimental commanders' after-action reports from the 2nd Brigade are probably closer to the truth as to what really happened than are the exaggerated reports from Beatty, Stanley, and Dick. It is entirely possible that scattered squads of men belonging to 2nd Brigade actually accomplished all or part of Colonel Dick's claims, but certainly these efforts were not conducted as a cohesive unit. Lieutenant Colonel Aldrich noted that his regiment was posted behind Stanley's brigade, and stated that Stanley's men in fact retreated through his own ranks and caused panic among the men of the 2nd Brigade.⁵¹ Some of the men from Dick's brigade did stand their ground and return fire for some length of time. However, these isolated pockets of resistance stood for less than 15 minutes before being overrun. Colonel Aldrich was able to rally about 40 of the men from his regiment and lead them to Horseshoe Ridge and into Colonel Harker's ranks. Colonel Harker acknowledged the

support of the 44th Indiana on Horseshoe Ridge and later on Snodgrass Hill.⁵² Captain Cosgrove, now in command of the 13th Ohio, was unable to steady his men against Breckinridge's attack and admitted to leaving the field in disorder. However, great credit is due to the captain as he was able to rally approximately 100 of his men to his colors on Horseshoe Ridge. Lieutenant Colonel Frambes stated that his men were also routed following the Confederate attack. His report mirrors his brigade commander's, though his claims were not verified by any independent means.⁵³ Major Jacob C. Dick of the 86th Indiana only briefly described the action, and noted that his regiment scattered after the Confederate attack. Major Jacob Dick did not regain control of his men until the following day. The losses for the 86th Indiana for the day were minimal: 1 killed, 13 wounded, and 7 missing.⁵⁴ It is fair to conclude that the 86th Indiana ceased to exist as a cohesive combat organization although some stragglers from the regiment are acknowledged for their participation with Colonel Harker in the defense of Snodgrass Hill.

Colonel Barnes and his men--once again task-organized out of the division--did not suffer the same absolute terror their comrades faced that day. Attached to General Wood's division, Barnes' brigade was involved in the untimely movement of that division to the support of General Reynolds. General Wood led the division to the left with Barnes' brigade in the lead, followed by Colonel Harker's and then by Colonel George P. Buell's brigade. General Wood met General Thomas on the Glenn-Kelly Road, and the division commander proceeded to explain his mission to the corps commander. General Thomas remarked that there

was no need to support General Reynolds, but that his 1st Division Commander General Absalom Baird was in desperate need of assistance and ordered General Wood to send a brigade to support General Baird. General Wood readily agreed to the mission, provided that General Thomas would accept responsibility for the change in orders. With the security of the corps commander's signature, General Wood asked for the help of one of the corps commander's aides to guide Colonel Barnes to General Baird's position. General Wood decided to send Barnes ahead while he returned to order his own two organic brigades forward. Colonel Barnes moved up to the front lines with the aide on a brief commander's reconnaissance, leaving his own brigade behind. General Wood returned to his own two brigades only to find that during his conference with General Thomas, the Confederates had broken through the center of the army and sheered off half of Colonel Buell's brigade, leaving only Colonel Harker's brigade intact.⁵⁵ General Wood now had his own men to worry about, and Colonel Barnes was left to fight under the command and control of a third general officer, General Baird. Colonel Barnes had changed commanders as frequently as one per hour on the final day of the battle.

Colonel Barnes galloped forward with the aide to find a position for his men to occupy. Once he identified his new position, he returned to his men and brought them forward all the while receiving fire from the Confederates. The brigade was enroute to the breastworks along Kelly Field when General Baird ordered Colonel Barnes to charge General Breckinridge's Confederates. The Southerners had just broken through the portion of the Federal line held by Brigadier John Beatty's

small force. After the fight on the 19th, Colonel Barnes was no stranger to attacking in a vague situation. He gave the order to charge, and with great spirit and resolve, his men surged forward through the cornfield. The initial attack by the 3rd Brigade was made only by the 51st Ohio and the 8th Kentucky, as the other two regiments became disoriented and misdirected before reaching Kelly Field. Men from other divisions joined in the effort which was ultimately successful in driving the Confederates back.⁵⁶ Barnes' brigade also won a trophy in the brief fight, a Confederate regimental battle flag.⁵⁷

After the attack was repulsed, General Baird requested that Colonel Barnes release two of his regiments to be held in reserve and controlled by Baird himself. Colonel Barnes agreed and sent General Baird the 99th Ohio and the 35th Indiana. For the 51st Ohio and the 8th Kentucky, the remainder of the day was relatively quiet as they maintained their position behind a barricade and secured the left flank of General Baird's division.⁵⁸ At 1700, General Baird received orders to withdraw from the field. Baird received these orders just as Confederate Brigadier General John K. Jackson began a coordinated attack with Brigadier General Lucius E. Polk against Baird's positions; the attack was heavily supported by artillery. General Baird was understandably reluctant to move the men during an attack, but the units adjacent to his had received the same order to withdraw and were in the process of retiring from the field. Unable to stay and fight it out by himself, Baird sent out aides with orders to the brigade commanders to leave their positions.⁵⁹ Colonel Barnes complied and fought a delaying action all the way across Kelly Field with the Confederates on his heels. Most

of 3rd Brigades' casualties at Chickamauga occurred during this fighting withdrawal, one such loss was Colonel McClain, Commander of the 51st Ohio, who was captured. The Battle of Chickamauga ended for Colonel Barnes and his men as they regrouped and found their way to Missionary Ridge. Later that night, Colonel Barnes led his men north to Rossville.⁶⁰

At approximately 1130, the Battle of Chickamauga was also over for General Van Cleve, yet there were still small portions of his men who banded together with their officers and fellow soldiers of the Army of the Cumberland for the climactic event of the campaign: the fight for Snodgrass Hill and Horseshoe Ridge. By all accounts from the men, the fight was described as confused and yet absolutely heroic. Captain Howe of the 79th Indiana characterized the Union defense of Snodgrass Hill as:

. . .the most striking example in the whole war of the coolness and intrepidity of the American private soldier when left to his own resources and compelled to fight on his own hook.⁶¹

Men did not have to be told of the seriousness of the situation; they realized it was critical and that quite possibly the fate of the army rested in their hands. United in their effort, the piecemealed formations of the Army of the Cumberland held off successive Confederate attacks until darkness came. Men loaded and fired their weapons and fought constantly, oblivious to the confusion around them. Artillerymen did not even bother to pull the pieces back into battery but kept up a constant fire. The concussion from the guns threw dirt and leaves into the soldiers' faces. One soldier remarked that he was left with his eyes and nose smarting; blinded, stifled, blackened, deafened, and

dizzy; he was scarcely able to keep his senses.⁶² The Confederates slowly moved their lines to the left to find the Federal flank. These attacks, conducted throughout the day and always preceded by the rebel yell, at times were repelled at the point of a bayonet due to lack of ammunition. The constant attacks eventually pushed the Federals back.

As darkness fell, the remnants of General Van Cleve's men retired from the hill and thought they had failed, giving the field to the Confederates. The men soon found out they had, with desperate valor, performed a miracle.

Endnotes

¹The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies Vol. 30, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1890), 840.

²Ibid., 847.

³Ibid., 609.

⁴Jason Hurd, 2nd Lieutenant, Company "G", 19th Ohio Regiment, Diary.

⁵The War of the Rebellion, 609, 803.

⁶J. A. Reep. "Four Years at the Front as a Private."

⁷Hurd.

⁸The War of the Rebellion, 609.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid., 808.

¹¹Ibid., 804.

¹²History of the Seventy-Ninth Regiment Indiana Volunteer Infantry (Indianapolis, IN: The Hollenbeck Press, 1899), 91.

¹³The War of the Rebellion, 808.

¹⁴Ibid., 609.

¹⁵Ibid., 804.

¹⁶Ibid., 610.

¹⁷Ibid., 609.

¹⁸Ibid., 809.

¹⁹Ibid., 610.

²⁰Ibid., 809.

²¹Ibid., 804.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid., 409.

²⁴Ibid.

- ²⁵Ibid.
- ²⁶Ibid.
- ²⁷Ibid.
- ²⁸Ibid., 819.
- ²⁹Ibid., 812.
- ³⁰Reep.
- ³¹The War of the Rebellion, 812.
- ³²Ibid., 816.
- ³³Ibid., 814.
- ³⁴Ibid., 816.
- ³⁵Reep.
- ³⁶The War of the Rebellion, 610.
- ³⁷Ibid.
- ³⁸Ibid., 820.
- ³⁹Ibid, 821.
- ⁴⁰Ibid., 836.
- ⁴¹Ibid., 852.
- ⁴²Ibid., 238.
- ⁴³Reep.
- ⁴⁴The War of the Rebellion, 824.
- ⁴⁵Ibid., 368.
- ⁴⁶Ibid., 369.
- ⁴⁷Ibid., 824.
- ⁴⁸Ibid., 379.
- ⁴⁹Ibid., 369, 379.
- ⁵⁰Ibid., 824.

⁵¹Ibid., 828.

⁵²Ibid., 831.

⁵³Ibid., 834.

⁵⁴Ibid., 829.

⁵⁵Ibid., 635-636.

⁵⁶Ibid., 840.

⁵⁷Ibid., 847.

⁵⁸Ibid., 841.

⁵⁹Ibid., 279.

⁶⁰Ibid., 841.

⁶¹Captain Daniel Waite Howe, 79th Indiana Regiment, Diary.

⁶²Reep.

CHAPTER 7
ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

Every war is rich in unique episodes. Each is an uncharted sea, full of reefs. The commander must suspect the reefs' existence without ever having seen them; now he has to steer past them in the dark. If a contrary wind springs up, if some major mischance appears, he will need the greatest skill and personal exertion, and the utmost presence of mind. The good general. . . must have exceptional abilities.

Carl von Clausewitz
from On War

General Van Cleve was not relieved of command nor was he the subject of a board of inquiry after the Battle of Chickamauga, even though his division broke in disorder during both days of fighting. For his part in the debacle, General Van Cleve was "reorganized" out of division command and never again commanded troops in combat. Orders published on 28 September 1863 posted General Van Cleve to command the garrison at Murfreesboro. He was probably spared an even more humiliating end to his career because the friction of war served as a viable excuse for the poor performance of his division. Problems inherent to this friction were significant contributing factors in the poor performance of the division, though the fact remains that General Van Cleve was never again trusted to command in combat. Van Cleve probably lost his command because he and his superiors had already determined the primary factor behind the division's poor performance, which centered around the shortcomings of Horatio P. Van Cleve.

Although General Van Cleve had little control over the "friction of war" surrounding his engagement, more significantly he did not have the ability to prevent, adjust to, or correct many of the unexpected situations he encountered. A commander possessing the leadership qualities required to lead men into combat might have fared much better in an identical situation. General Van Cleve's poor leadership and poor battle command were the primary causes behind the division's poor performance at Chickamauga.

In order to dissect the causes of a division's poor performance in combat,

The trap of reductive fallacy which reduces complexity to simplicity, or diversity to uniformity by confusing a necessary cause [primary factors] with the sufficient cause [contributing factors] must be avoided.¹

Nothing is clear and simple in combat. The noise, the smoke, the confusion, and the terror make it extremely difficult for even the actual participants to define exactly what happened in order to determine why events happened as they did. One man's perspective of the battle may be completely different from that of the man fighting to his immediate left or right. Therefore, an evaluation of the performance of Van Cleve's division at Chickamauga 133 years later has been a complex undertaking and cannot be closed in a few simple paragraphs listing a few simple reasons.

There are several obvious causes for the poor performance of the division at Chickamauga. These are *sufficient causes*, explained by the friction of war, but by themselves are not the *necessary causes* for the division's poor performance. This separation of causes is analogous to our modern-day method for investigating safety accidents: the

investigating officer can easily identify the contributing factors (*sufficient causes*), but then must delve further into the primary factors (*necessary causes*). Many times the *sufficient causes* confuse the issue. The less obvious and sometimes elusive *necessary causes* are overlooked as the investigative officer dwells on the issues which are easily identified and explained, even though the root of the problem may actually go much deeper.

On the 20th, General Van Cleve's division was overrun during the Confederate breakthrough, but this occurred through no fault of the division commander himself. The magnitude of the problem was such that there was very little Van Cleve personally could have done to bring any control to the situation. He was acting under orders and happened to be at the wrong place at the wrong time. His division was positioned behind a brigade which was situated astride a major gap in the Federal line. None of the senior commanders in the near vicinity succeeded in their attempts to control the rout. Therefore, the assessment of the performance of General Van Cleve's division focuses primarily on its actions on the 19th of September.

The friction of war was the basis for the sufficient causes of General Van Cleve's failure to maintain any semblance of command and control of his troops on the Chickamauga battlefield. Clausewitz said that friction is a force that theory can never quite define. In trying to describe the friction of war in simple terms, Clausewitz wrote,

If one has never personally experienced war, one cannot understand in what the difficulties constantly mentioned really consist, nor why a commander should need any brilliance or exceptional ability. Everything looks simple; the knowledge required does not look remarkable, the options are obvious. . . . Everything in war is very simple, but (in war) the simplest thing is difficult.²

The sufficient causes for the poor performance of the division on the 19th center around three major issues: first, the lack of guidance or support from the corps commander; second, the gap between General Van Cleve's right flank and Colonel King's left flank which allowed a Confederate brigade to attack into the unprotected right flank of Van Cleve's 2nd Brigade; and third, the artillery fratricides which fueled Van Cleve's unorganized withdrawal out of the timber east of Brotherton Field in the late afternoon on the 19th of September.

General Van Cleve received his mission from the corps chief of staff while marching north on the LaFayette Road, rather than from the corps commander himself. These orders simply stated that his division was to move to the support of Palmer. Any additional guidance or clarification of the mission General Crittenden might have imparted to his subordinate division commander at this short meeting never transpired. Once General Van Cleve led his division into the fight at the Brotherton Field, he did not receive any additional guidance or support from his corps commander. Had General Crittenden been involved with the preponderance of his corps, he might have played an instrumental role in directing the effort of his two divisions in a manner similar to the self-imposed role chosen and played by General Reynolds. General Crittenden could have ensured that Colonel King did indeed secure Colonel Dick's right flank, which would have eliminated the unfortunate gap. The corps commander also could have prevented the friendly artillery fire on Van Cleve's troops in the treeline. General Reynolds, for his part, had an imperfect sense of General Van Cleve's situation and his well-intentioned efforts to lend some assistance may

have actually had an adverse impact on Van Cleve's troops. Had the corps commander been present at Brotherton Field to ensure that he had set the conditions for the success of his own division commanders, these two tragic and fateful events which contributed to the friction of war might have been avoided. Finally, General Crittenden allowed General Van Cleve to take only two of his brigades into the fight. If the 3rd Brigade had been allowed to deploy with the division, this brigade could have eliminated the gap caused by Colonel King and his brigade, limiting the breakthrough General Stewart eventually achieved.

However, the necessary causes for the division's poor performance lie not with the noise, confusion, or poor guidance of the day, but rather are concentrated on General Van Cleve himself and his own battle command. As mentioned earlier in the thesis, many a soldier during the Civil War lived or died according to his commander's steadiness in leadership and ability to make quick and sound decisions. The commander's ability to accurately "see himself," "see his unit," "see the enemy," "see the terrain," and "visualize an endstate" essentially define an excellent combat leader from a mediocre or poor commander.

General Van Cleve suffered from an inability to "see himself" honestly which had an adverse effect on his soldiers. He was too old for the hardships that faced a senior commander during the American Civil War. He lacked the combat experience accumulated by his peers on earlier battlefields. Physically, he had been plagued by sickness and personal discomfort throughout the summer and early fall of 1863. Just prior to Chickamauga, Van Cleve mentioned that dysentery, lack of sleep and food, and the long marches were taking their toll on him, but

disregarding his body's warnings, he continued to command the division. Once the battle was over, he finally acknowledged to his chain of command that he was unfit for division command and asked to be assigned to a quiet post, such as garrison command.

General Van Cleve lacked the necessary combat experience that enabled a commander to effectively lead even in the confusion caused by the friction of war. As a regimental commander, he fought in a battle of major significance, but of minor actual combat. His regiment fought for less than 30 minutes of the action, yet his performance propelled him to promotion to Brigadier General and brigade command. As a brigade commander, he did little more than maneuver his brigade through the South, never participating in any appreciable combat action. Later, as the Federal Army continued to grow in troop strength, he was selected to command a division. As a division commander, he and his soldiers were on the field at the Battle of Perryville, but were held in reserve during the entire battle. Two months later at Stones River, he was wounded during the first day of battle and left the field after the fighting had subsided that day. Therefore, his one-day fight at Stones River was Brigadier General Van Cleve's only substantial combat experience before Chickamauga.

General Van Cleve also suffered from an inability to accurately "see his unit." He did not adequately prepare his subordinate commanders to meet the stresses and strains of combat. The biggest leadership challenge that Van Cleve faced at Chickamauga was the high number of inexperienced leaders in command of his brigades and regiments. Chickamauga was their first experience handling large numbers of troops in

combat. The 1st Brigade had two new commanders, and in the 2nd Brigade, every commander--including the brigade commander--was new to command. In the 3rd Brigade, Van Cleve had a new brigade commander and two new regimental commanders. It was General Van Cleve's responsibility to ensure these men were adequately trained and prepared for combat. Once in combat, he had to be able to give additional support and guidance to these men, but at Chickamauga as on previous occasions, there seemed to be a marked amount of inactivity from the General at a time when his assistance was needed the most to steady the new commanders. The lack of references to their division commander in the subordinate commanders' after-action reports are indicative of his failure to support his junior officers. General Van Cleve failed to determine the worst that his subordinate commanders could do and then failed to supply sufficient close supervision to ease the effects of the worst that could happen.

Ironically, the situations General Van Cleve encountered at Chickamauga were similar to the situations he had encountered at Stones River, yet he seemingly did not learn from the hard and costly lessons taught him in this battle. The lessons from Stones River include: the importance of flank security when entering a vague situation in dense timber, the importance of establishing liaison with adjacent units, and the strength of artillery as a second line of defense. Lessons General Van Cleve personally should have learned are: where does the division commander need to position himself to best command and control his brigades, and which formations are more or less advantageous than others in dense timber. During the summer months of 1863, General Van Cleve had more than enough time to work with his subordinate commanders and train

his troops. The Assistant Adjutant Captain Otis remarked after having witnessed troops from England, France, and Germany that Rosecrans commanded an army which was at least equal to any army in the world in terms of bravery, discipline, intelligence, and efficiency. Yet for all of these positive attributes, none of them led Van Cleve to concentrate on the insights gained from the fight at Stones River. Given all of the time available to the division commander, it appears that Van Cleve did not make the best use of his most valuable resource.

General Van Cleve did not properly "see the terrain." Once his division stepped off into the treeline east of Brotherton Field, his ability to command and control the unit was significantly reduced. As he became transfixed by the fight happening to his front, he totally lost his situational or battlefield awareness. His unit moved less than 200 yards into the timber; General Van Cleve, at the rear of his line of battle, was only 150 yards from the LaFayette Road. Given the open conditions of the timber in 1863, he could have easily observed what was going on around him and to his rear. Furthermore, although the majority of his staff was with him, none of them were dispatched to request additional support until the division had already disintegrated. General Van Cleve's men fought against the first brigade General Stewart hurled against them for an entire hour, but there is no evidence to suggest that General Van Cleve ever came out of the timber to ask for assistance or sent his aides in search of additional support for his right flank, nor did he go about among his men to understand what was going on.

General Van Cleve suffered in his ability to "see the enemy." His division was probably plagued with the same misconception the rest

of the Army of the Cumberland had: that the Confederates were a beaten foe. They mistakenly believed that the Confederates had been in a constant state of retreat and would not stand to fight the Army of the Cumberland. The most recent conflict the men of the division experienced was the Battle of Stones River. Since that time and for the next nine months, the only Confederates the men saw were either dead or in retreat. Everything they saw, heard, and experienced led them to believe that the Southern soldiers were deserting in droves and would not long remain a viable force to contend with. This sentiment led to overconfidence and, even more dangerously, to complacency. The men, though anxious, may have felt very well assured of victory as they marched into action on the 19th, confident that the fight would not last long.

General Van Cleve did not have the benefit of battlefield information that a modern-day commander receives from his G-2 intelligence officer. Yet if the division commander had thought through some simple battlefield calculus and kept in mind how the Confederates fought, he may have realized that the formation in which he chose to enter the timber was a poor choice. General Van Cleve selected the typical Federal brigade formation: two regiments forward and two regiments in reserve. However, the Confederates normally fought with all regiments on line. This automatically gave General Stewart the initial advantage over Van Cleve's division in terms of numbers of men who could operate against Van Cleve's troops. The formation General Van Cleve chose effectively reduced his combat power by 75%. To further complicate the matter, Van Cleve's formation gave the 2nd Brigade very little time to react to any emergency and caused additional confusion as it moved up on

line with 1st Brigade. Arguably, Van Cleve's 2nd Brigade regiments never recovered from this maneuver while facing fire to their front. Clayton's Confederate brigade numbered approximately 1,352 men--its size allowed for a brigade frontage of 1,350 feet. General Van Cleve's frontage was approximately 1,200 feet, once Colonel Dick was able to bring his brigade on line with 1st Brigade. Although the Confederates initially had an advantage in length of frontage, this was lost as all regiments of the 2nd Brigade eventually fought on line.

In this case, force ratios proved to be a poor guide because of the combat multiplier: competent and confident leadership which can not be measured with a simple mathematical equation. A look at the forces each division commander had available is very instructive into the sufficient causes of Van Cleve's failure. For the first hour, General Van Cleve fought with his own two brigades which numbered approximately 2,506 men and four artillery pieces. General Stewart fought the first hour with 1,352 men and without the support of his artillery. General Stewart did receive some support by the men of Wright's brigade, namely the 38th Tennessee. During that hour, both sides lost considerable numbers, but neither side yielded any ground.

In the second hour of the fight, General Van Cleve was joined by Colonel King's three regiments on his right and King's fourth regiment on his left. The second line of defense behind General Van Cleve had grown to a respectable force of three regiments and 21 cannons. Meanwhile, General Stewart, limited in his ability to mass all his combat power, could only replace Clayton's battered brigade with Brown's fresh brigade. However, Brown's brigade found the gap and began to

dislodge Van Cleve's troops. General Van Cleve and his division then fell back in a disorganized swarm on the second line of defense. The assembled force amounted to pieces and parts of 14 regiments plus the artillery, while General Stewart could only replace Brown's brigade with his last and most experienced brigade commanded by Bate. The aggressive frontal assault was conducted with combat veterans but without the support of artillery. The attack was supported by a timely secondary attack made by another Confederate brigade. The combined weight of both attacks destroyed any fighting capability left among the Federal troops on Brotherton Field. Van Cleve had a tremendous amount of combat power available to him, yet a smaller but better led force defeated his division. Again, in the final analysis the *necessary cause* for the division's poor performance was Van Cleve's own shortcomings.

General Van Cleve's most obvious leadership failure was his inability to "visualize an endstate." General Van Cleve received the mission and apparently did not take the time to sketch out a plan of attack for himself or his commanders. Certainly the vague situation demanded that Van Cleve plan for the worst. As the battle lines were drawn and his men fought for a solid hour, Van Cleve did nothing but watch the fight. On his left, General Palmer came out of the dense timber to ask for additional support. On his right, Colonel King also came out of the timber to ask for assistance. Obviously, the other commanders were fighting under similar situations and were thinking of their next step while General Van Cleve appeared consumed with watching the fight to his front; he became so decisively engaged that he did not fulfill his

responsibilities to his brigade commanders. It was his duty to set the conditions for their success, and he failed.

General Van Cleve was not totally devoid of the necessary qualities to lead soldiers in combat. He did have many redeeming qualities. He was, after all, recommended for promotion to Major General by General Rosecrans after the Battle of Stones River. He showed tremendous physical courage in battle. He remained with his troops even after he was wounded while fighting at Stones River and while his own staff officers were being killed right next to him at Chickamauga. Also at Chickamauga, he was singled out as the only officer able to rally men to support his defenseless artillery batteries. He showed great moral courage while making extremely hard command decisions for the good discipline of his unit. Specifically, the execution of the deserter Private Minix and the relief of Lieutenant Colonel Hamilton just prior to Stones River are two examples of a leader unafraid to make tough choices. Finally, he remained loyal to a cause he believed in--regardless of the immense pain and suffering he had endured up to Chickamauga. This same moral courage kept him in the army filling a decidedly unglamorous position as the garrison commander at Murfreesboro. A man of lesser courage would have resigned in disgrace rather than remain in an army which had determined that he did not have the ability to command troops in combat. Van Cleve remained faithful to the army and the cause, fulfilling his heartfelt responsibilities to his country. General Crittenden accurately described General Van Cleve's positive aspects when, after observing Van Cleve rally his infantry in

the final moments at Chickamauga, he remarked that General Van Cleve was a brave and pure-hearted officer.

In the final analysis however, the obvious and blunt truth is that General Horatio P. Van Cleve was a poor division commander with a poor grasp of the art of battle command. Herein lies the true value of the study of Van Cleve's division and the proximate causes behind its poor performance at Chickamauga. General Van Cleve's poor leadership caused him consistently to react to outside forces rather than visualize and evaluate the overall situation and to determine a counter-course of action. He also lacked the ability to take the necessary steps, issue the necessary orders, and ensure these orders were properly executed.

It is essential that leaders in today's army know that the human dimension in war has remained constant throughout time. Even when weighing the impact of the tremendous improvements in weapon systems and technology, soldiers still require foremost the firm and steady hand of a competent and confident leader. Men in Van Cleve's division referred to their first experience in combat as "seeing the elephant." As our army is exposed to a steady increase in military operations other than war and the possibilities of Force XXI, it is important to remember that our soldiers will still "face the elephant" and that then, as always, high quality leadership will be the deciding factor in our success or failure.

The most necessary dynamic of combat power is competent and confident leadership. Leaders inspire soldiers with the will to win. They provide purpose, direction, and motivation. Once a force is engaged, superior combat power derives from the courage and competence of soldiers, the excellence of their training, the capability of their equipment, the soundness of their combined arms doctrine, and, above all, the quality of their leadership.³

Endnotes

¹David Hackett Fischer, Histories Fallacies, Toward a Logic of Historical Thought (New York,: Evanston Press, 1970), 172.

²Carl von Clausewitz, On War (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 119.

³U.S. Army FM 100-5 Operations. (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, June 1993), 2-12.

STRUCTURE OF THE 3RD DIVISION, 21 CORPS: 19 SEPTEMBER, 1863

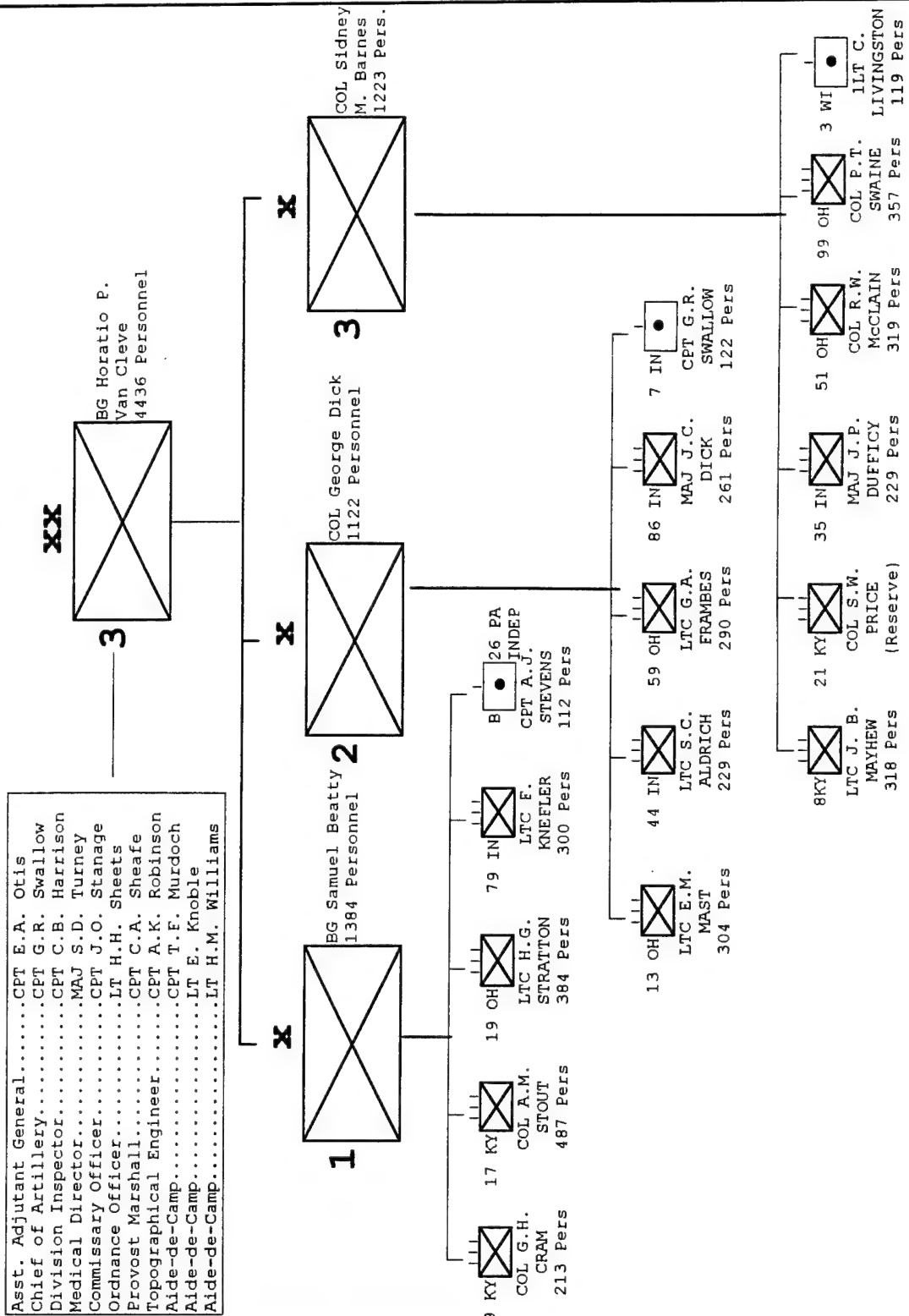
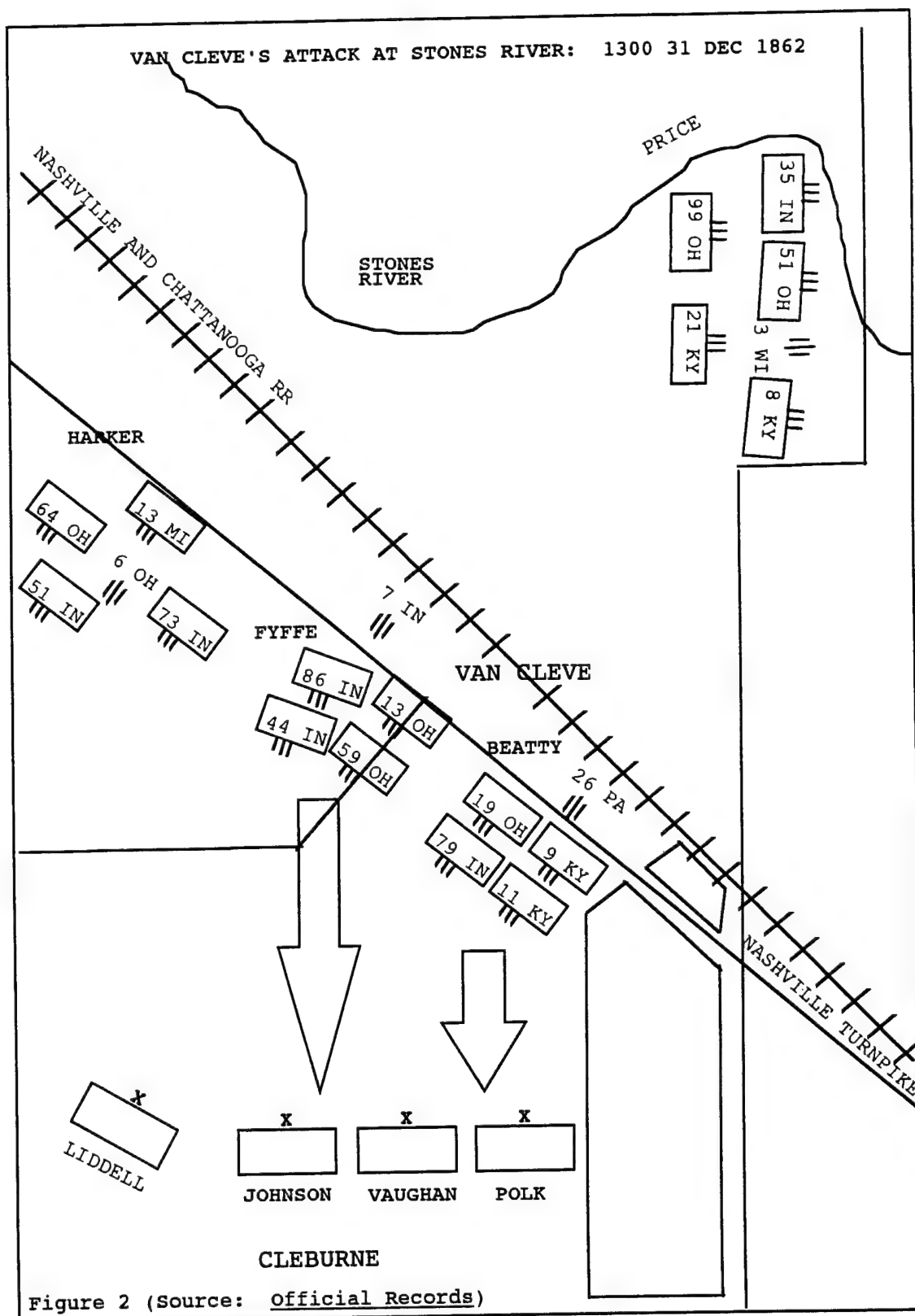
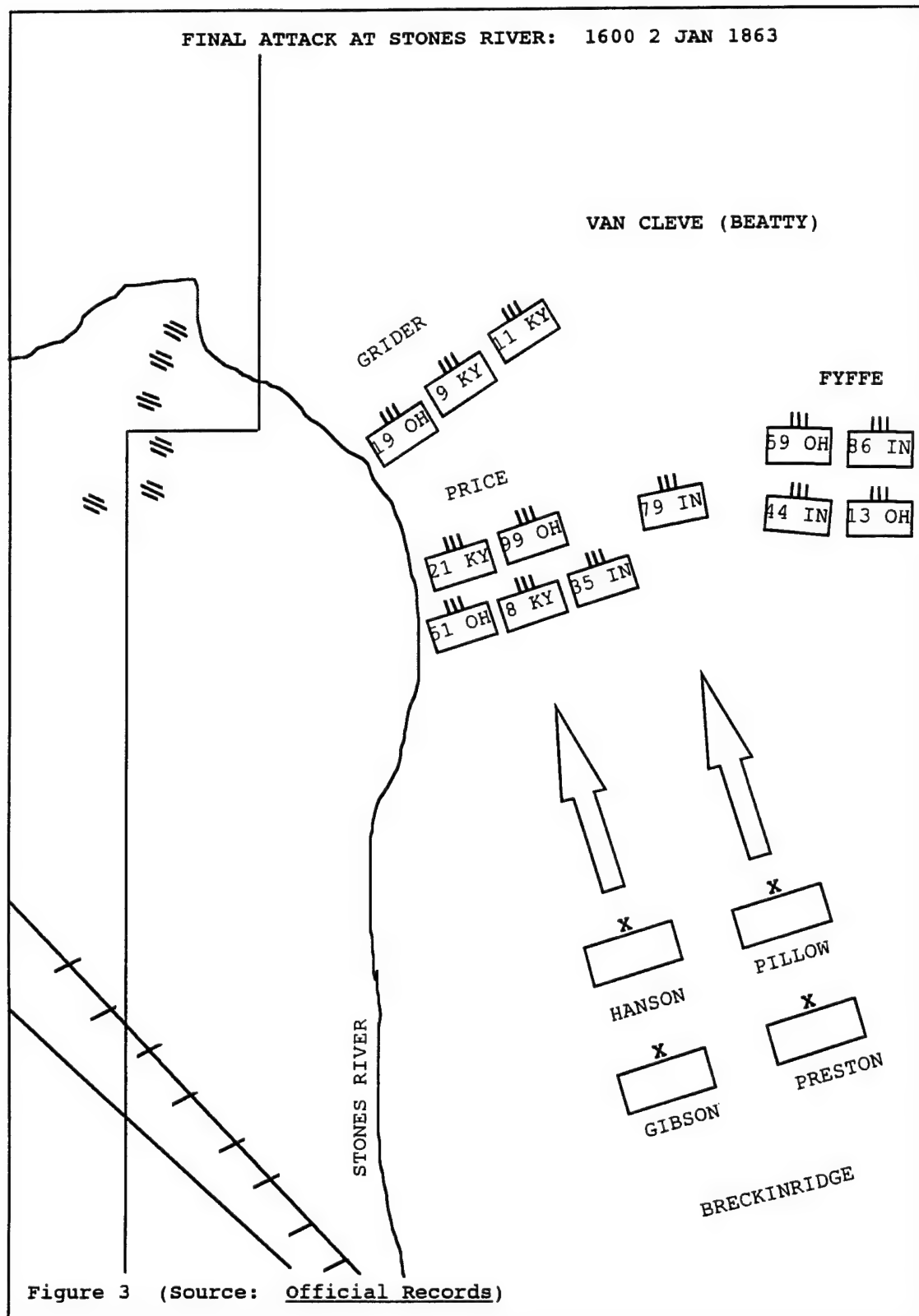


Figure 1 (Source: Official Records)





3RD DIVISION 15 AUG - 18 SEP 1863

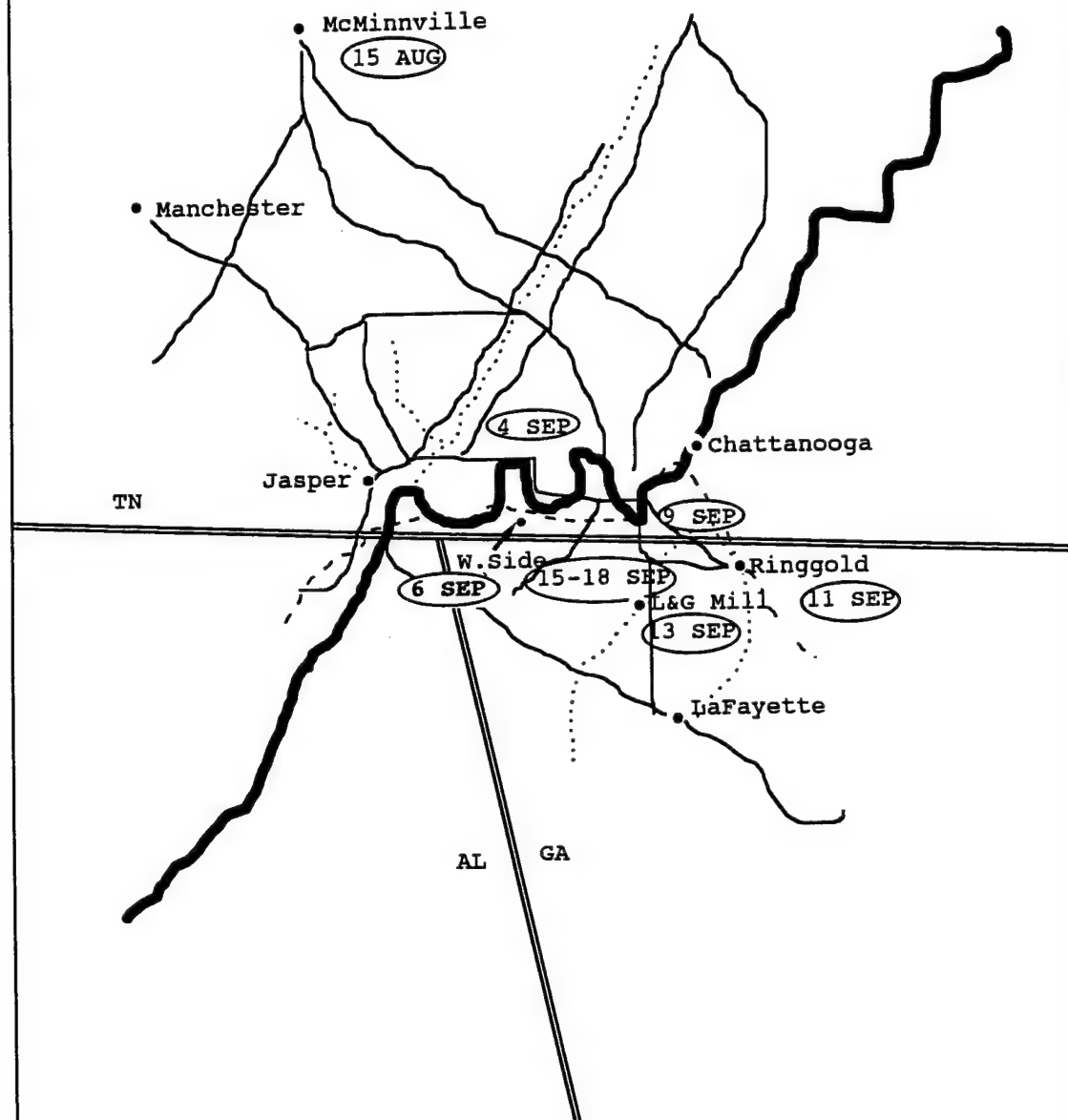


Figure 4 (Source: Official Records)

OVERVIEW OF CHICKAMAUGA

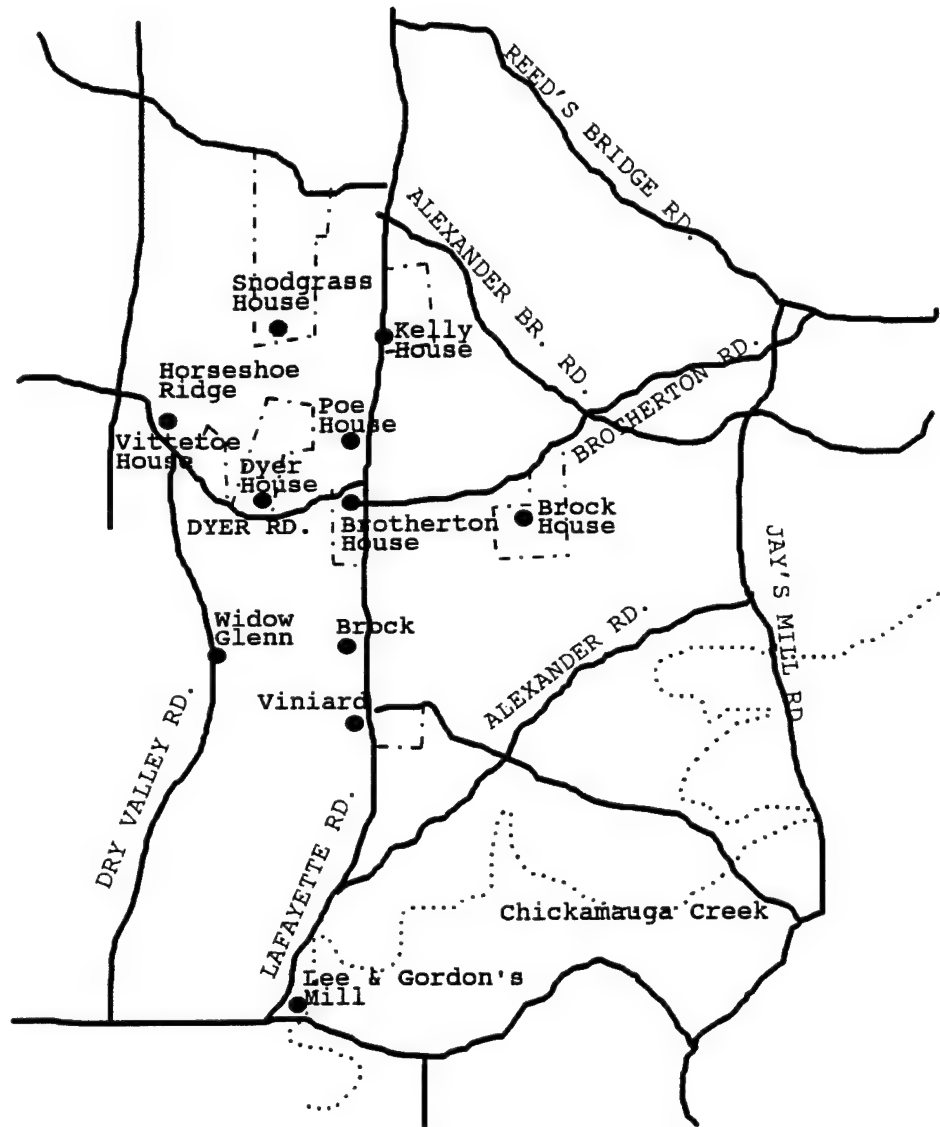
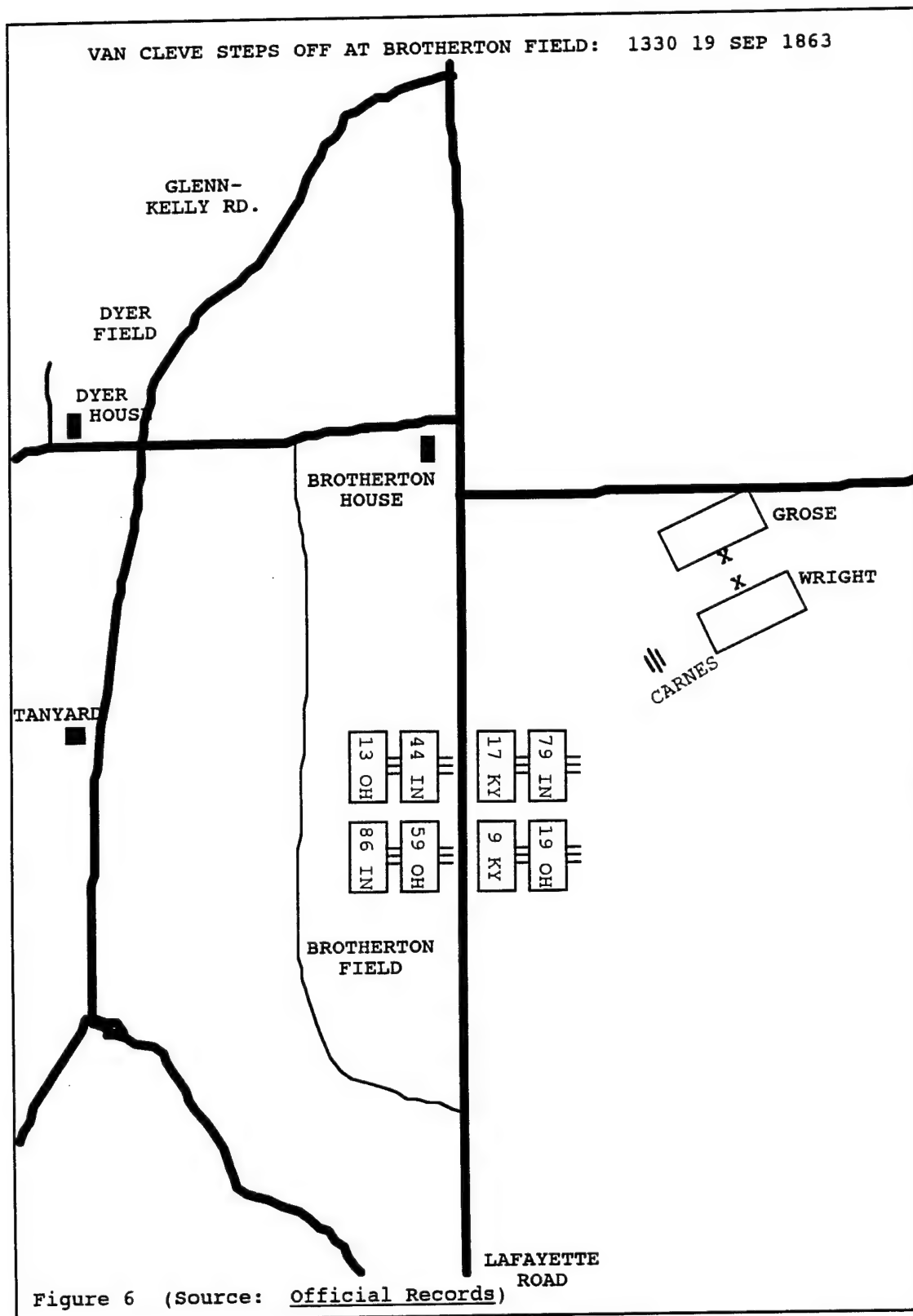
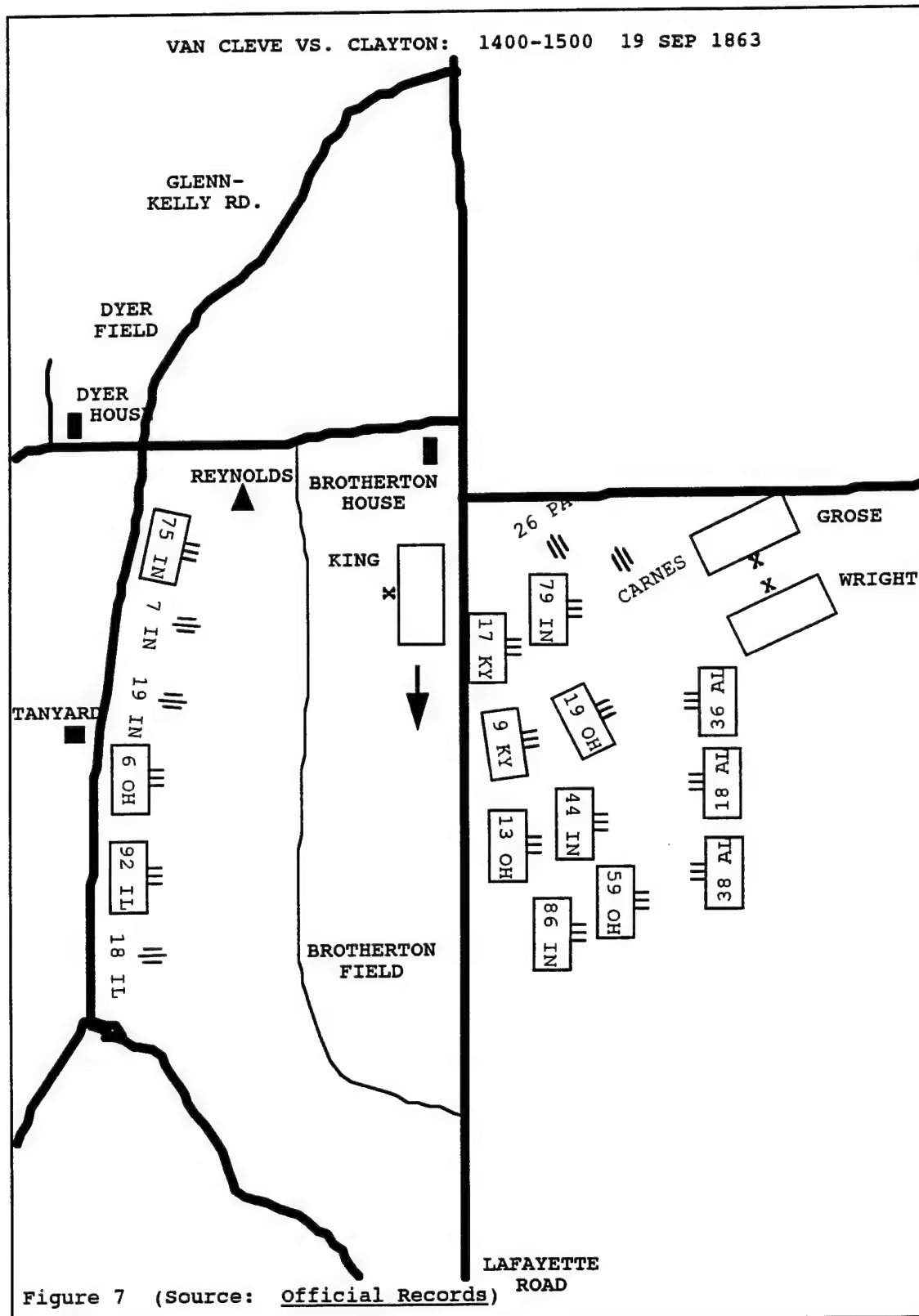
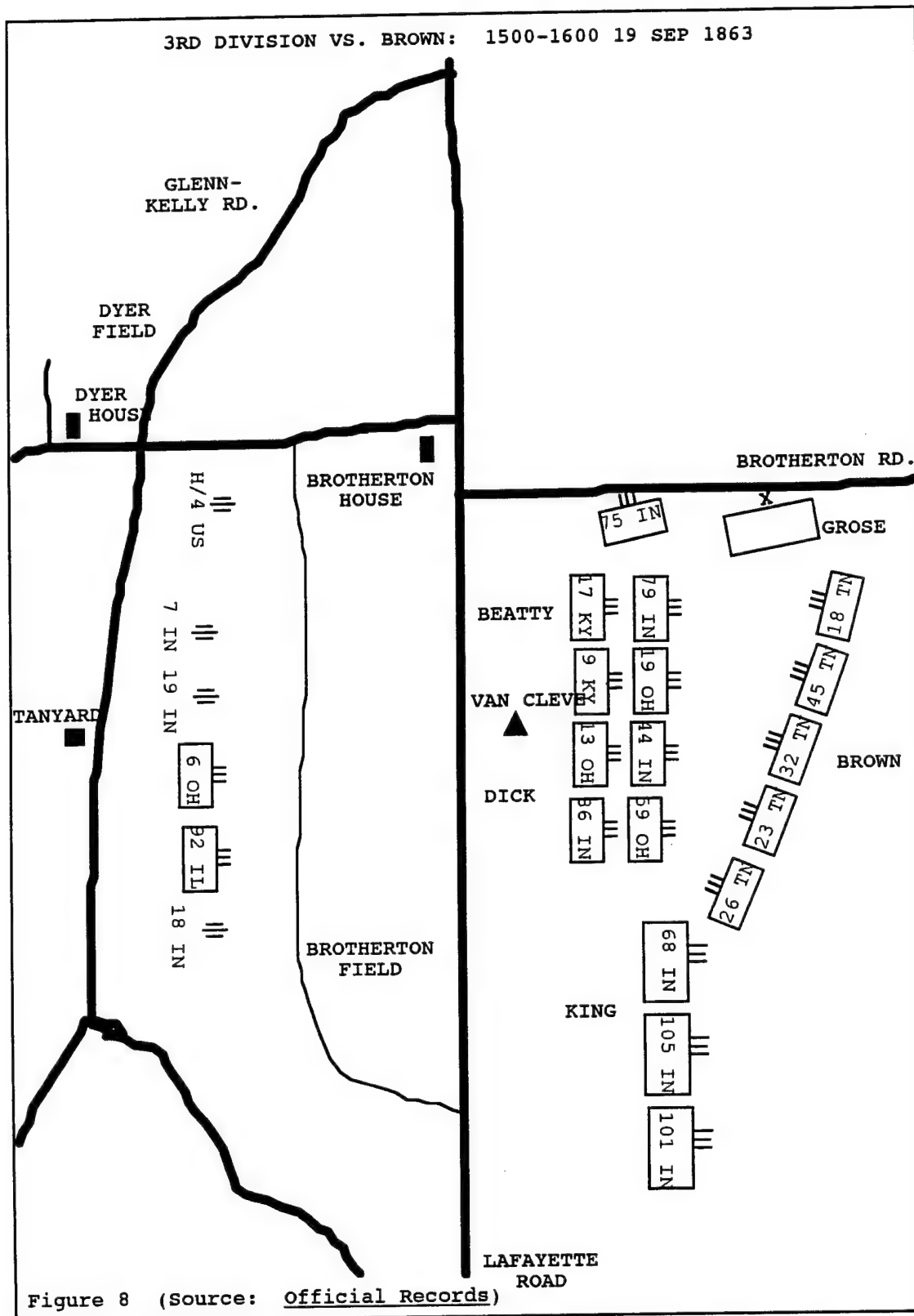
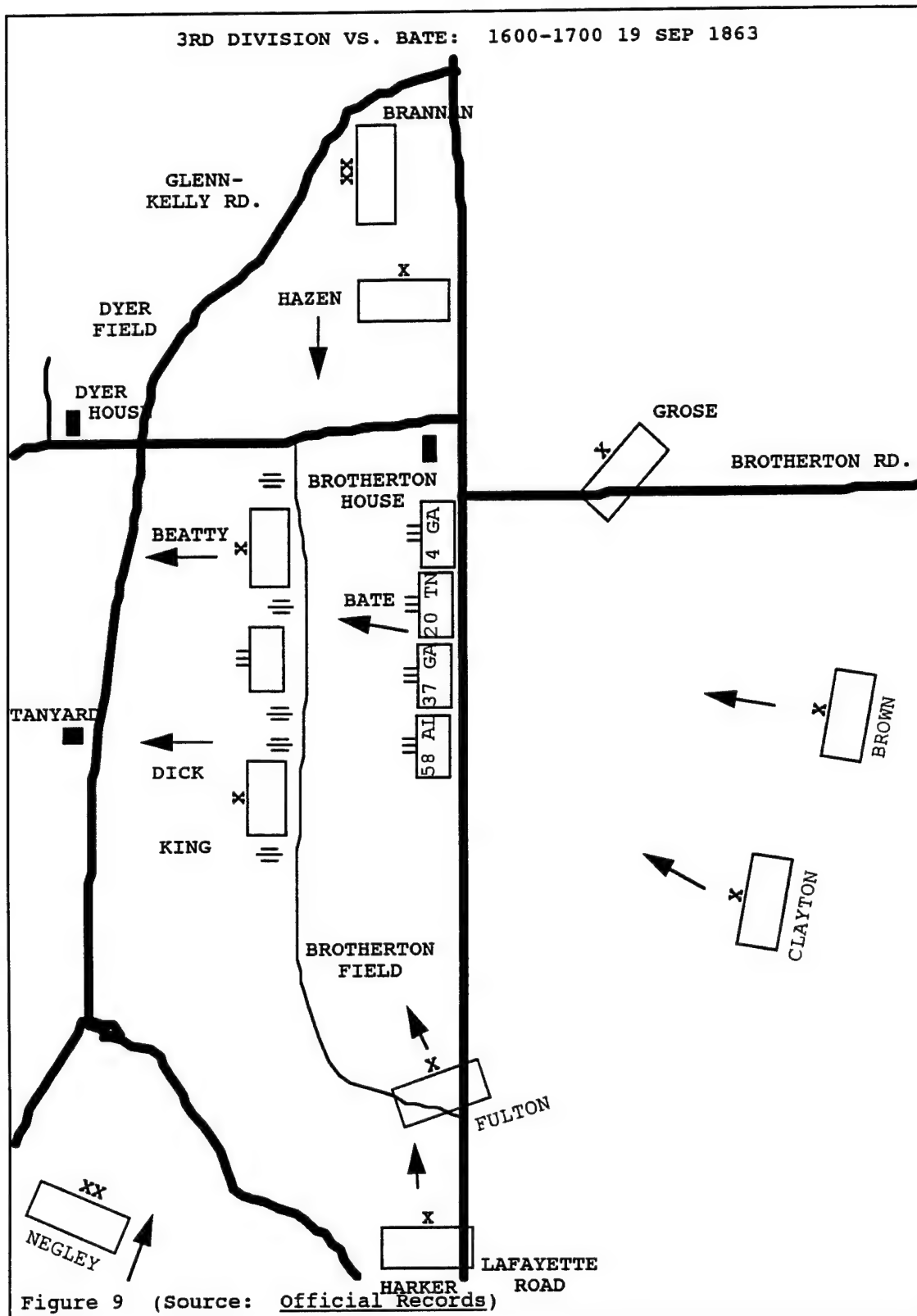


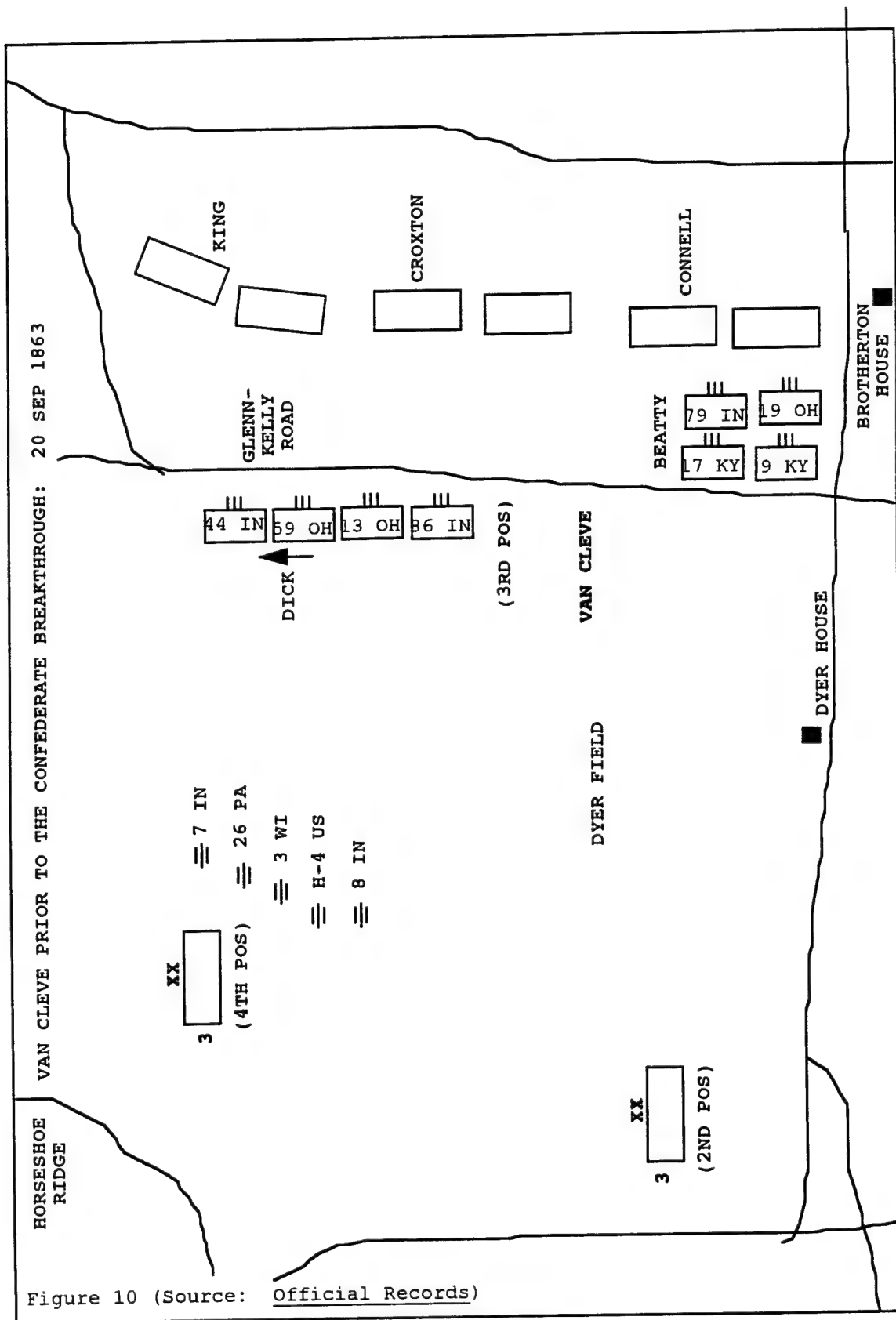
Figure 5 (Source: Official Records)











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